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– THE

TRIAL

OF

EPISCOPACY.

REPORTED BY

R. C. C. *A. M.* –

POUGHKEEPSIE :
PUBLISHED BY P. POTTER.

P. & S. Potter, Printers.
1817.

SOUTHERN DICTRICT OF NEW-YORK, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eleventh day of April, in the forty-first year of the Independence of the United L. S. States of America, PARACLETE POTTER, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor in, the words following to wit:

"The Trial of Episcopacy, Reported by R. C. C A. M."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States entitled "An Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the Copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the time therein mentioned." And also to an act, entitled, "an Act, supplementary to an Act, entitled an Act for the encouragement of Learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints."

THERON RUDD.
Clerk of the Southern District of New-York.

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TO THE READER.

This book owes its existence to the following circumstance :—In a recent company, composed of gentlemen of high respectability, but of different religious denominations, the tenets of the various sects into which the great family of Christians is divided, became the topic of conversation. The company, altho' agreed on some of the most important doctrines of the Gospel (viz.) of salvation by the Son of God; of the power and influence of the Holy Ghost to sanctify the soul, and of the ever blessed Trinity of the Godhead, entertained a contrariety of opinion on a

variety of other subjects, which drew them into controversies, as learned as they were spirited.

The controversies which were thus commenced, were continued from time to time with so much zeal and ability, as at length to excite the attention of the public, and they finally drew together some hundreds of the most pious, and learned of the American nation, who formed themselves into a council to settle the important matters in dispute.—The following is a record of the proceedings of that council, for the accuracy of which, the Reporter feels himself solely accountable.

THE

TRIAL

OF

EPISCOPACY.

As soon as a sufficient number of the gentlemen had convened, they proceeded, as is usual in such cases, to appoint a Chairman: when *President James* was elected by an unanimous vote, and by a similar vote, Daniel was chosen Secretary.

The assembly being thus organized, the chairman enquired the business to be done.

Doc. Presbyter Primus answered, that it was to ascertain,

1. What the visible Church of Christ is.
2. What constitutes membership in that Church.
3. What is the precise nature of its constitution.

On which the Chairman remarked—Gentlemen, business of so great importance to mankind, of such solemn moment to the souls of men, should not be proceeded upon rashly. Every thing relating to it should be done with great deliberation

as well as with decency and order. This assembly should recollect that they are, in this case, acting for the present not only, but for future ages ; that the decisions of so extensive and respectable a council may be expected to be quoted as authority by future generations. Every party concerned, should therefore be present ; and when present, should disdain to be influenced by sectarean views, and be willing to submit to the only true standards of divine truth—to the scriptures, to facts, and to the monuments of antiquity. I therefore presume to enquire, if the different denominations are properly represented by some of the most pious and learned of their communion. If this be not the case, some measures should be adopted to effect so desirable an object.

On enquiry it was found that they were, except the Methodist and Protestant Episcopal christians.

On motion, it was therefore resolved, that this assembly adjourn, for the space of four days ; and that the secretary immediately invite the Protestant Episcopal and the Methodist Churches to send delegates to this convention, at the same time stating to them the nature and importance of the business to be transacted.

ADJOURNED.

On the fifth day following, the session was resumed according to adjournment. The interesting nature of the subjects to be discussed, brought together, besides the original members, an immense concourse of Christians of every denomination, constituting the most respectable Christian assembly ever convened in the United States.

Doc. Bishop appeared on the part of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and Presiding Elder on the part of the Methodist christians. Being thus organized, the Chairman addressed the assembly in the following words—

Gentlemen, it is with a degree of diffidence that I at this time fill this chair—a diffidence which arises from a conviction of the momentous nature of the subjects about to come before this assembly, and the part I am to bear in the decision of the questions which may arise. I hence feel this situation more important than any I have before been called to fill, and my accountability perhaps greater than in any station in which I have before been placed. But I trust, Gentlemen, you are sensible, and especially those of you who are entrusted with the "mysteries" of Almighty God, that I am not alone accountable in this matter. I trust you are sensible, that you, with me,

must render to the Judge of all, a scrupulous account of the trust, which in his providence, is now committed to us.

With the subjects about to be discussed, many of you may be expected to be much better acquainted than myself. I shall therefore place great dependance upon your wisdom, your learning, and your piety, for my guide and support, while I have the unexpected honor of holding this seat. I shall hear you with patient attention; and I pray that all that decorum and order may be observed, which the place and the business demand.

The first subject before you, is, to ascertain "what the visible Church of Christ is?"

The gentlemen will speak singly, without interruption, and will now begin.

Doc. Presbyter Primus. Sir, as I had the honor of proposing this question, it will be expected that I first should make some remarks upon it.

You have with much propriety noticed the importance of the subjects now before us. I am indeed deeply impressed with the force of your observations. I am aware that what is now done by this numerous and learned body of christians, *may* greatly affect distant posterity. The deliberate decisions of such a body of men as now sur-

round me, selected as they are, from one of the most enlightened nations on the globe, will necessarily have a salutary or baneful effect on posterity, as they shall or shall not be controuled by the maxims of divine truth It is therefore my earnest desire, that every thing should be done, not only "decently and in order," but done also with deliberation and intelligence. The question now before us is a preliminary one to others equally important, and should therefore be settled with accuracy. To me sir, nothing is of more importance than to know what Christ's Church is, and where it may be found. For I do assure you, my brethren, that unworthy as I am, I would not for the whole world, and all the kingdoms of it, be in doubt whether I was in the Church of Christ or not—whether I was translated or not, into the kingdom of "God's dear Son." I would not be in doubt whether I have the sacraments, or whether I have them not. But how can I be sure in this case, unless I know what the kingdom of Christ is, where it may be found, and what are the marks by which it may be known? I know that doubts have arisen in the minds of many on this subject; of many of enlightned minds and pious hearts; doubts which have placed them "in

a strait betwixt two." We therefore rightly judge this to be a subject of vital importance to Godliness. We have fallen on times when some say, "lo, here is Christ," or "lo, there is the desert" or "in the next chambers," and are bid to take heed that none deceive us. Some speak of a Church within, which can be known only *by feeling*; some there are who contend that the temporal community of Christ is not visible; others preach that the same Church is *visible*, but self-formed and constituted by man. But my brethren, what a terrible case should we be in, if we had no sufficient warning given us, and no rule to go by! Thanks be to God, this is not the case. But as the lightning that cometh from the east shineth into the west, so plain and notorious was the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world, together with the form of its constitution, and the order of its ministry in all the countries where it was planted. It would be unreasonable; indeed it would be lamentable; it would seem as if God had mocked us contrary to the nature of his mercy, that he should publish a way of salvation and leave it uncertain where that way may be found. From what is said of it in the gospel, it is impossible that the Church should be a society, obscure and

hard to be distinguished. ‘ Ye are the light of the world” said Christ to his disciples; “ a city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.” Now light is sure to show itself, and it comes in a straight line which directs us to its source. A City placed upon a hill is so elevated above other objects, that it cannot be difficult to find it ; rather it is impossible to miss it—it “ cannot be hid.” And Christians in all ages seem to have agreed that it shall not be hid. For when we approach a city in any part of Christendom, the Churches are generally first seen towering over all other buildings.

Furthermore Sir, Christ hath given us a precept, that under certain circumstances we should tell our case to the Church; but unless it be known where and what the Church is, this cannot be done. The precept therefore supposes that the Church must be known to us. The same must follow from the injunction of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews—“ obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.” The *rulers* of this Church must therefore be known to us; for it is impossible we should do our duty, and submit ourselves to them, unless we are sure who they are. The Church

must therefore, in its nature be a society manifest to all men. Some may slight it, and dispute it, and refuse to hear it, but they cannot do even *this*, unless they know where it is to be found. The Church of Christ then is a visible institution, capable of being seen and known by all.

In the next place, this Church is in no sense derived from this world. It is not the work of man; nor can it possibly be so. The distinctive nature of it is, through the whole scriptures, laid in its *opposition* to the world. Of the world Christ said to his disciples, "Ye know it hated me before it hated you." The apostle St. Paul, speaking of mankind, before translated into the kingdom of Christ, describes them as "aliens and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world;" but after translated, as "children of the kingdom of Christ." Indeed the Church* is so named because it is *called* or *chosen* out of the world. Until it *is* so called out of the world, it hath no *being*. But it cannot call itself, any more than a man can bring himself into existence. Our christian calling is therefore as truly the work of God, and as

* Ecclesia, called or chosen.

much independent of ourselves, as our natural birth. In other words, Christ founded his own Church and perpetuates it by his own power and authority. Further, the Church must have *orders* in it for the work of the ministry; but no man can ordain himself, neither can he (of himself) ordain another, because no man can give what he hath not. "How shall they preach," saith the scripture, unless they be sent? And again, "no man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron," Nay, even "Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee," So that in no sense can Christians be made by *man's* authority. They must be made by that power which Christ gave to his Church, that power with which the Redeemer of the world clothed his apostles, and which has descended in the line of their successors. As his Church is *visible*, so is his authority conveyed by *visible instruments;* and unless thus conveyed, it cannot be had. And again, Sir, this Church is not of the world, because it must have *power*, without which it can do nothing to any effect:—but in it, there is no power but of God. In other words, no man can act in the name

of God, but by God's appointment. No ambassador ever sent himself, or took upon him to sign and seal treaties and covenants without being sent—that is, without receiving authority from an higher power so to do. The act, so far from being lawful, would be treasonable. Nothing therefore can be plainer, than that the Church neither is, nor can be, from man. It is no human institution; and as it acts under God, if it act at all, it must act by his authority and appointment. It is thus properly called the Church of God, and mankind might as reasonably presume to make God's *world*, as to make God's Church.

Layman Primus. Before the Rev. gentleman proceeds Sir, I wish to ask him a single question for information, as some of his arguments go directly to condemn the practice of many of our congregations. The question I ask is this—If a community of people form themselves into a society, choose a man who *feels* himself to be called of God, appoint him to the priesthood themselves, and he administer the sacraments of the Gospel to them, will not *they* be a Church of Christ, and *he* a regular priest of the living God?

P. Primus. I shall answer this gentleman Sir,

in the fear of God, and according to the tenor of his word. My answer then is, that *they* would be no more a regular Church, nor he any more God's minister, than a band of soldiers who should without authority, embody and organize themselves, and appoint a general to command them, would be an army of the United States. For if Christ the Redeemer of the world, the Son of God, took not upon himself the priesthood until commissioned by the Almighty Father—if his apostles acted not until they were *empowered*, if their successors stirred not their hand in the Holy work, until clothed with *apostolic authority*, (and that this was the case, the scriptures expressly declare) how can we, how dare we, call him a minister of Christ who derives his authority from his equals, who have no authority to give; and how call that community of people a Church, who have never submitted to that authority, viz. the authority of Christ, which alone can call them out of the world ?

Some among us, my friends, (I wish to say it with all deference, but I must clear my conscience from the crime of temporizing)—some among us my friends, have erred in this respect. Some think they can make their own religion,

and others think they can make their own church, or can be a church unto themselves, and so unhappily fall into the delusions of enthusiasm, or the uncharitableness of scism—Churches and a ministry have been thus self-formed, and laymen have ordained laymen, and those thus ordained, have ordained successors: and thus the delusion has been perpetuated, so that in some instances it is difficult to know by what power the Clergy act. But let me assure my brother, " it was not so from the beginning." No: the Scriptures declare that it was not. And all the monuments of antiquity, from the days of Christ for 1500 years, declare that " it was not so from the beginning." We may safely challenge the whole world and all the kingdoms of it, to show us a single Church self-formed in the first fifteen centuries. They were all organized by apostolic authority—which is the authority of Christ, perpetuated by him in that priesthood which he ordained. And I challenge any to show a person clothed with the ministerial powers, by any but the successors of Christ and his Apostles. Congregations did then choose men, who themselves *trusted*, and whom their brethren *believed*, " were *moved by the Holy Ghost*," to take upon them the mi-

nistration of the word and sacraments. But these congregations thus choosing, never presumed to follow the sin of Korah and his company—never assumed the priesthood. And the persons thus chosen, although they believed themselves moved by the Holy Ghost to the work of the ministry, never presumed, never dared to act, until they were not only *called* as was Aaron, but also like him, visibly *authorized* and sent. No. In the pure and primitive ages of Christianity, such an assumption of the priesthood would have been accounted sacrilege: and never until a late period, when the Church of Christ was divided by the sin of scism; when enthusiasm and fanaticism did much towards overturning the institutions of Christ, was it ever pretended, that an *inward call* was a warrant for administering in Holy things. The plenitude of the spirit was ever accounted an indispensable *qualification*, but it was never accounted *authority* to administer the word and sacraments.

Sir, I wish my learned brethren not to take my sayings alone on this subject—I appeal to the scriptures; I appeal to the records of antiquity, and if a solitary fact sanctioning the modern notion of inward calls, constituting authority to ad-

minister in holy things be produced, I give up the argument. I believe I have already proved beyond a dispute that Christ's Church is a visible body, capable of being known by all men, and that this Church was planted and supported by Jesus Christ, that it is not the work of *man* but of God. This the scriptures declare, and this the early writers, those Fathers in the faith, who were as distinguished for their learning, and their piety, as for their sufferings for Christ, with one voice declare, and shall we in contradiction to these high authorities, these highest of authorities, the undisputed history of facts recorded in scripture, set up the *feelings of men*, or their trust to an inward call? All agree in the defectability and depravity of man in his best estate. How wild then to set up the *impressions* and *professions* of the depraved *creature*, in opposition to the testimony of facts which transpired under the immediate influence of God? This is dethroning the Almighty, and placing the creature above the Creator. It is, in one word demolishing the whole fabric of the Christian system, and sending man afloat on an ocean of doubts, to find the church in the whims, the feelings and fancies of mankind. It is breaking down

the standards of divine truth, the acts of Christ and his apostles, and laying waste the whole vineyard of our divine Lord, to the ravages of corrupt man. I wish however my learned brethren may take a part in this investigation, and that all may speak freely and candidly, so that the question being examined in all its bearings, may be settled on its true and permanent footing. With this view and with the prayer that God may guide and bless us, I stop to hear.

The chairman then observed, that if any other gentleman had any thing to offer on the question, he hoped he would proceed.

Dr. Bishop. Sir, after what has been said by the Rev. gentleman, it would seem needless to enter into a further discussion of this question. His scripture authority and his appeal to the antients, cannot fail to carry conviction to every mind. Whatever the Church of Christ is found to be in one age, it will continue to be to the end of time, unless the Divine Head and Founder of it see fit to change it. Of any change we possess no knowledge. That the church was at first a visible community, separate from the world, is evident from that authority which Christ gave to his apostles to govern it: for surely he would not

give them authority to govern an invisible community. That it was visible, is also to be inferred from the visible sacraments which he authorized the apostles to administer in it; for surely he would not command them to baptize with water, and administer the elements of bread and wine, in the holy supper, to a church not to be distinguished from the world.

And that this Church is of the immediate appointment and institution of Christ, the scriptures teach, as well by their whole tenor, as by particular passages. He appointed its doctrines, its priesthood, its sacraments, and its worship. While on earth he was its visible as well as spiritual head. It is therefore, in every sense the Church of Christ. It, in no sense, belongs to the world.

When Christ was about to ascend, he established a visible head in the line of his apostles; but they were its head only by a delegated power. They acted under him and by his authority and when he appointed them as a visible head, he clothed them with authority to appoint others to succeed them. He then said "lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world"; that is—he would accompany that power, that authority of

presiding in the church, and of ordaining others, to the end of time. And Sir, his promises never fail. He is then still in the world, and accompanies that apostolic power. It is as much *his* authority now, as it was eighteen hundred years ago. Unless his promise is broken, the succession, the visible succession is not broken. And he has promised that "the gates of Hell shall never prevail against it." They have not prevailed. This succession is capable of being traced from the apostles to the present day. So plain is it in the Scripture history, that "he who readeth may run and understand." And if we can place confidence in the early writers—men who shone as stars in the firmament by their wisdom, by their godliness, and by their sufferings in the Christian cause—men who wore out their lives and become willing victims to death, in the triumphant hope of rendering a joyful account of their stewarship—equally evident is it, that this Church and the regular successions of its apostolic priesthood, continued without a solitary interruption. And although men have set up churches and priesthoods of their own, and have railed at this apostolic authority, still it remains the same. As no man *gave* it, so can no man take it away. Saith

Ireneus, an early Father, Lib. III. Chap. 3. "the apostolic tradition is present in every church. We can enumerate those who were constituted bishops in the church and their *successors even unto us*. And this is the language not only of Ireneus, but also, of all the writers down to the reformation—a period from which it is not difficult to trace our origin as Christians.

Now Sir, wherever the succession of this authority has been continued in the priesthood; and under it, men celebrate the worship and the sacraments of the Gospel by faith, there we find the visible Church of Christ. The visible Church of Christ then is "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered *according to Christ's ordinance*, in all those things that of necessity, are requisite to the same."* This Sir, being the case—Christ's Church being a visible institution, as has been fully proved; he having ordained a priesthood, and given his delegated power to that priesthood, to govern and perpetuate his Church to the end of the world, *wherever we find the succession of that power dispensing the word and*

* Art. 19. P. E. Church.

sacraments to faithful men, we find the Church of Christ, and no where else. I know Sir, in later times men teach a different doctrine—I know men come forward disputing every visible authority; in the warmth of their zeal, claiming to be empowered of God to pull down others and build up themselves;—but I must be plain on this subject. Sir, I must beg leave to question their authority, until they show me their commission and trace their descent from Christ. I am sensible that new things in religion are captivating and popular; that in these days many new inventions are sought out—that the mysteries of an *inward call*, accompanied with high denunciations, and flaming professions, are calculated, as a torrent, to lay waste the vineyard, of our Lord. But they can never prevail but to a certain extent. For he who has pledged himself to support his kingdom—he who says to the ocean, hitherto shalt thou come but no further, he who said the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, will protect his Church to the stupendous day of his second advent.

The saying of men Sir, shakes not my faith. I know that men ordained by man's authority, speak with boastful contempt of what we have this day, heard proved to be the authority of Christ. I

know they have answered those who have remonstrated with them, telling them, "thus saith antiquity, and thus did the apostles say and do," *we regard not the apostles—we are taught of God; we have a commission from Heaven.* But to me, Sir, these things are suspicious. They should not move us; on the other hand we should be contented to stop, to "look out the good old way, and walk therein," for in so doing we are assured we shall find rest to our souls.

Layman Secundus. Sir, if the Rev. gentleman be done speaking, I have a remark to make. Notwithstanding all that has been said about this visible church and authority, I am impressed with a belief, that an apostolic ordination is not indispensable to a valid ministry; I believe if the man possess the *inward call*, the outward is not so material; and I think the scriptures seem to favour my belief, especially the declaration of the Apostle St. Paul to the Corinthians, where he says "ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn and be comforted."

What the gentlemen contend for, does *seem* to be true; still we must not my brethren, establish any system which shall limit the spirit of God. The plan which the gentlemen are advocating,

seems to depend too much on dry scripture reasoning. It seems to limit the holy fervor, which is often stirred up by the Spirit of God in laymen. Besides, it would unchurch much of the christian world. I hope therefore this question may be well considered before a decision is had.

Presbyter Primus. Sir, until I heard this gentleman's observations, it was not my intention to have again spoken on this subject. The authorities are so full and so plain that I was in hopes, the bewitching love of mystery, and blind veneration for supposed inspiration, would give way to sound and sober conviction. I would ask the gentleman who last spoke, what evidence he has, that those persons *have* a spiritual commission, who profess to be appointed by God to preach and to dispense the visible authority which Christ established? Do they evidence it as did the Apostles, by miraculous works, the only evidence which can in the nature of the case, be admitted? None pretend to this. It is only because they are good and zealous men. But is goodness and zeal a proper criterion in this case? It is always right to venerate zeal and piety; but we must not let that veneration overthrow the express institutions of God, and controvert fact and scripture. I think

I see this veneration working on the mind of the gentleman who has just spoken; and it does not lessen my love and esteem for him. I know him to be an honest and good man—and I know it is the unaffected simplicity of his heart, which makes him lean towards what is, in his sober conviction, an error. In the sincerity of friendship, I would ask him, if he could be influenced by similar considerations in reference to temporal things? Suppose an eminently pious man should come to him, saying that God had revealed to him, that he must give one fourth of his estate to the Church—suppose he should in the language of pious fervor, *exhort* him to go and deposit his money in the fund—would he not be apt to think, that this good man had got some whim in his head—that he was mistaken—that he had taken some delusive *dream* for a revelation from God? I really believe he would. His veneration for his piety, his admiration of his devotedness to the cause of Christ, would never convince him that that man had a divine commission which would authorise him to require the surrender of a fourth of his property.

Will he then let his veneration of the same man's piety subvert the laws of a positive institution of Christ—subvert the testimony of facts

plainly stated in the word of God, and recorded by the blood of martyrs ? Are convictions firm and invincible in the one case, but light and superficial in the other ? Are we willing to give up our reason and understanding in *religion*, but in nothing else ? Surely it is not of so little importance whether we are or are not in the fold of Christ, as that we can be justified in permitting ourselves to be " blown about by every wind of doctrine." Can it be possible that all civil compacts, formed by *man*, are so regular and snug as we see them, that they should be universally governed by known laws, and that Jesus Christ has left his Church so loose and irregular as that it can be easily mistaken, or that the knowledge of it should at all depend on the virtues of even the best of men ? If this be the case,surely the children of this world have become wiser in their generation than even the Son of God !

No my brethren, Christ has so organized his visible kingdom, that it may be certainly discovered and known, if we are disposed to seek it ; and he hath established certain infallible marks by which his *officers* may be distinguished ; for they are to be *called* and *sent* as was Aaron. This is the scripture account of the matter. Tim-

othy who was ordained by the apostle, is commanded to commit the same office which he had received, to faithful men, who should be able to teach others. But how shall Timothy know who are those able and faithful men ? Shall he ordain every man who says the Spirit moves him to preach ? Or, will the spirit immediately point out to Timothy, the man who is to be ordained ? No. He must enquire into the qualifications of those who offer themselves to the work—*They must be sober, blameless, of good behaviour, apt to teach.* St. Paul says to Titus, " for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou mayest ordain elders in every city ;" and he enumerates to him the necessary qualifications in those to be ordained ; admonishing him to " lay hands suddenly on no man." Indeed my Brethren, since the Holy-Ghost has given in the Gospel, sufficient directions concerning this matter, we should attend to them and look for no other.

But since the Gentleman who last spoke, adduced an authority from St. Paul's writings, which he says *seems* to favour his belief, we are bound to notice it. The whole sentence is this. " Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the others judge. " If any thing be revealed to another that

sitteth by, let the first hold his peace; for ye all may prophecy one by one."

In the Corinthian Church there were many, endowed with spiritual gifts, who were ambitious to display their gifts, and to speak, several at once, to the confusion of one another, and of the whole assembly. To correct this disorder the apostle says, if any man speak, let it be by two, or at the most by three, (i. e.) let not more than two or three speak in the same meeting, and let not those speak all at once, but in *course*, one after another. Let the prophets speak two or three in succession, and let the other judge—and if while one (prophet) is prophecying, any thing be revealed to another, (i. e.) another *prophet*, let the first prophet hold his peace." Let the first finish his discourse, and cease from speaking, before the other begins—"for ye may all (all the prophets) prophecy one by one. If ye will observe order in your assemblies, all the *prophets* may have opportunity to speak, and ye need not interrupt one another.

Prophets were an order of public teachers in the primitive church. *They only* are the persons who the apostle says, may all prophecy. The words therefore, so far from allowing, plainly forbid private Christians to start up and teach in re-

ligious assemblies. They forbid those who pretend they are so overpowered by divine influence that they cannot refrain ; for " the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets"—and " God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of his saints."

I am not Sir, impatient to hasten the decision of this question; but I cannot see that the definition of the Church of Christ given in the course of this debate, can be questioned.

Layman Tertius. Although the Rev. gentleman *cannot*, I think I can. He has not attempted to answer the argument just now offered, that " the mode of defining the Church of Christ, now contended for, unchurches much of the Christian world." I think it is an argument of great weight —one which it will be found difficult to remove. For myself I am an advocate for Christian Charity. Charity " is the bond of peace," it is the distinguishing virtue of the Gospel, and I think with the apostle, that " it should abound."

Presbyter Quartus. Sir, I think the observations of this gentleman of great interest, not only in reference to his appeal to the principles of Charity, but also in reference to the effects which

a decision, " that there is no true Church of Christ, unless established after the apostolic practice and by a succession of authority from Christ, would have, at least in some parts of our own country—and I doubt not Sir, but that the effects would be more serious in reference to many christians in Europe as well as America, than these my brother presbyters, who so warmly advocate it, are aware of. As to our own country; president Stiles, used all his learning and genius to disprove the accusation brought against his connection, that they were practising on lay ordination; and after all his exertions, he had candidly to confess, that there were *some* instances in which that *was* the case. Now what would be the consequence of the present expected decision? Why a part at least of that extensive community (and no one can certainly tell what part) must be unchurched; and all must be left floating on the ocean of uncertainty, under the dreadful doubt whether they do or do not, belong to Christ's visible Kingdom.

I hope the gentlemen will be very scrupulous in the examination of this subject, and very prudent in their decision.

Chairman. Gentlemen, it would certainly be

proper that the assembly in general, and the s gentlemen in particular, should be satisfied as to the points they insist upon. You hear that the charge of *uncharitableness* and *evil consequences*, have been brought against your observations. For my own satisfaction, and for the benefit of the whole community of Christians, I am very desirous of hearing what your wisdom and learning may suggest in answer to this charge.

Presbyter Primus. Sir, I did not neglect to answer the first gentleman upon these points, because I had no remarks to make, or because I wished any part of the argument should be passed unnoticed; but because I was almost sure the gentlemen themselves, would on reflection, perceive that no such charge can with propriety be brought against the positions which we have taken. Now Sir, I deny the charge of unchurching all, and consequently of uncharitableness. In examining this question we are in search of truth—we are seeking into matters of fact—facts stated in the scriptures and in other authentic history. If in the examination of these authorities, it should evidently turn out, that I am not a lawful minister of Christ—that I have not my authority from him through his apostles—I say, if it should

so turn out, I should not be *unchurched ;* for in that case, it will appear that I never have *been churched.* I should be sorry that it *should so turn* out—but I had rather it should *be so,* than not know the truth at all. For when I *know* it, if I have been wrong, I can become right. And truth will be truth Sir, be the professors never so few. Multitudo errantium non parit errori patrocinium, (it is not great numbers of misled persons that can make falsehood truth or right to be wrong) is a latin saying, and will ever hold true. If I am out of the Church of Christ, thousands of brethren, in the same condition will not help me; and it would be the highest charity in one of these brethren, if he knew the fact, to acquaint me with my error. And would it not be equally charitable in one who knew he was in the church to undeceive me ? Surely it would. The apostle says " we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." So should *we* say. If this learned, this numerous council should a thousand times decide, that certain congregations are Churches of Christ, and certain ministers are duly authorized, if they are not so, our decision can never make them so. Christ's Church was founded by Christ, is supported by Christ, and all the decisions of all the men

upon earth can no more make a church than they can make a world.

Would it be uncharitable in any man who knew I was so unfortunate as not to be a member of Christ when I *thought* I was—would it be uncharitable to undeceive me? Every man says, no. My having been for years, or my ancestors having been for centuries in the error, alters not the case. Error is error still, though ever so venerable by age, or amiable by virtue. Should a gentleman making a journey to a particular place, be met by either of us proceeding on a road leading in a different direction, and to a different place; on what principle could it be accounted uncharitable to apprize him of his mistake—nay suppose this whole assembly were present, and should assure him he was in the right road; would that alter the case? Would it be turning the traveller *out of his journey* to put him in the *right way?* It certainly would not. No, nor would it be unchurching a community of people, to point out their error, to shew them they were in the world, by shewing them the Church of Christ. So far from leading them from it, it would be introducing them into the fold, in which they *thought* they were, and into which they should a-

bove all things desire to be. No Sir, this cry of unchurching and uncharitableness is a mistake—is entirely unfounded, and I think I can see where the difficulty lies. It consists in associating ideas with the subject which do not belong to it.

The impression of many is, that in proving that such and such sects have not a valid scripture ministry, and consequently are not a regular scripture church, we exclude them from every opportunity of salvation. Now this is as foreign from the fact, as can be conceived of. We consider these churches as not regularly organized, and that it is only in a regular organized church, only in the real Church of Christ, as our confession of faith expresses it, that there is any ordinary possibility of salvation. In other words, it is to the members of this church alone, that God has vouchsafed his promises. But we by no means deny, that God does continually grant extraordinary "possibility" of salvation. On the contrary we declare most readily, and delight in the thought, that the piety of thousands, in irregular communions, will be accepted. God is not confined to his promises, although *we* are.

We are sensible that many churches, which

we esteem irregular, embrace "in their bosom a large portion of piety," and we do not entertain the most distant thought, that the want of regularity in their constitution and ministry, will preclude them from salvation, when that irregularity proceeds from necessity, or honest error. On the contrary we believe that such error will be forgiven; and sincere piety accepted, in all who profess the faith of Christ. No charity can be more extensive than this.

We think, that if our ministry and church, be of divine institution, (and that they are, I think we have offered abundant proof,) the inevitable consequence is, that this regularly received authority of Christ, is essential to the visible Church. Therefore, if our position be true, we unchurch no one, and are uncharitable to none; but on the contrary, we are exercising the most extensive charity in reference to all.

In reasoning upon the question which now occupies the attention of this assembly, we must remember we are discussing a matter of fact, for the benefit of all; we are endeavouring to determine "what the Church of Christ is"—We should therefore in no sense, associate the idea of unchurching any denomination of Christians, and

especially, of excluding them from final salvation. We should put the discussion upon this principle, that since the pretensions of all sects are publicly made, that one of us is as liable to be proved wrong as another, and let the event of the trial determine, who does stand and is supported by the truth. This is the fair ground on which to place the subject. If in such case, we give it a full and impartial trial, the fact will appear. For it is impossible that the Son of God has left this momentous subject—his *church*—his *own* body—his *own kingdom*, in such obscurity that there are no marks, no evidence, by which it may be certainly known. On the contrary I think these marks have been discovered, this evidence adduced—But still I wish the investigation not to stop here—I wish if the Gentlemen have any thing further to adduce, they may present it with that freedom and candour which I know they possess.

Layman Tertius. Sir, I confess myself satisfied with the answer which the Rev. gentleman has given me. I am convinced by his remarks that we are wrong in associating with the subject, ideas foreign to it, and can now see no cause for a charge of uncharitableness.

Chairman. Gentlemen, I am pleased to see

such a display of order and decorum as prevails in this assembly. It convinces me that all are duly impressed with the importance of the matters before us. And I have the happiness to be pleased with your candour, with the coolness and dispassionate manner in which you conduct your arguments, and with that strict reference to charity and impartiality which I discover among you. It will be recollected by all, that a definition of the visible Church of Christ, has been given, (viz.) "*the Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which, the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.*"

You have heard how this definition has been explained, and with what arguments it has been inforced. The weight of proof is yet, certainly in favor of the said definition. If any other gentleman has a different definition, he will offer it: or if any one have any further observations to make, on the one already offered, he will now proceed.

Presbyter Tertius. I presume Sir, that the assembly is satisfied with the clear view which has already been given of the subject, and that a decision will now be proper.

Chairman. I am unwilling to close this subject until every gentleman shall be satisfied. And I now pause to give place to any observations or arguments.

Since it is by the silence of all, confessed that the important question before us is sufficiently investigated, I now proclaim that any one is at liberty to enter his protest against the definition of a visible church which I have just recited : and if no such protest be offered, I shall consider it as established by this council to be the standard.

Gentlemen—It seems unnecessary, since there is such an apparent unanimity of opinion among you, to be particular in a summary of the arguments which have been offered upon this question. It is sufficient to recapitulate, that our blessed Redeemer did establish while on earth a visible church—that in it he did establish a ministry, clothed with power to perpetuate his kingdom—that he promised to accompany his delegated power to the end of time, that it appears from scripture and authentic history, that he has fulfilled his promise, and that his church may be found wherever the succession has been preserved in the priesthood, and the power thereof exer-

cised in administering the word and sacraments to faithful men.—ADJOURNED.

THIRD DAY.

MET ACCORDING TO ADJOURNMENT.

Chairman. Gentlemen—Your attention will be this morning called to the examination of the second question, originally proposed to this assembly, (viz.)

" *What constitutes membership in the visible Church of Christ ?*

The previous one being settled, I apprehend it will be less difficult to determine this—I am now prepared to hear what your wisdom and learning may suggest upon it.

Presbyter Primus. Sir, it is with a degree of pleasure, I am unable to express, that I observe so much punctuality and such undivided attention in this numerous assembly ; and it affords me equal pleasure to hope, that these momentous questions on which some contrariety of opinion has hitherto been entertained, are about to be considered in all their bearings, under the influence of the piety and learning which now surround me.

On the question before us, I have to observe, that since it has been proved, and to me proved

beyond a doubt, that Christ's Church *is a visible institution*, and organized under a visible regimen, the first enquiry should now be, whether he instituted and ordained visible ordinances in it. That this was the case, taking the sacred word for authority, there cannot be a question. When Christ clothed his apostles with power, he said unto them, "go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

When he instituted and celebrated the Holy-Supper with his disciples, he said, "do this in remembrance of me." And we find that these Christian officers acted under the authority they received, and implicity obeyed the above injunctions. They continually taught the great doctrines and precepts of Christ. They were occupied in prayer and in breaking of bread, and as they found men listen to Gospel truth, as soon as they found them willing to become disciples of Christ, they admitted them into the visible school by baptism. On the day of Penticost, thousands were instructed, and thousands were baptised. To the importunate enquiry of those who were "pricked in their hearts," and exclaimed, "what shall we do?" the Apostle answered, "repent and

be *baptised* every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

We find in the practice of those holy messengers of God, the apostles, a continued attention to this ordinance, and that they invariably administered it to all converts. We find in the course of their history, fifteen or sixteen instances in which baptism was administered, and we find it particularly recorded, who were the subjects, what was the manner, and what the matter, with which it was performed. So that it must be extreme prejudice or ignorance, which can leave any man to doubt, that there were visible ordinances established in the Church of Christ, and that these sacraments were constantly celebrated in the practice of the first Christians.

This matter is not left Sir, to *our* understanding and explanation of the scripture account. We have the opinions and the practice of the early Christians, successors to the apostles, who lived in their age and the age immediately succeeding. These men, renowned for their piety, as well as their wisdom, must have known the mind of Christ and his apostles upon this matter. It was a matter of fact in which the Christian Church could not be deceiv-

ed—and it was not until more than fifteen hundred years after they lived and died, before any christians ever questioned the necessity of the visible ordinances, or the visible authority which Christ ordained in the church.

This voice of universal consent, this voice of antiquity, this voice of the church in her pure, her primitive days, when she was uncorrupted and undivided, should be heard with veneration ; and this voice so exactly according with the scripture institutions, and apostolic practice, must carry conviction to every thinking mind.

These facts being thus established Sir, it will be easy to see what constitutes membership in the visible church. Baptism was always administered, and its necessity enforced on every convert to Gospel truth. The converts on the day of pentecost, on the day of their first conversion—the jailor, in the very hour in which he appealed to the apostle—Lydia, as soon as she heard the word of God preached—were all *baptised.* None were received as disciples by the apostles except those who were subjects of this ordinance. In this way baptism evidently becomes the seal of adoption into Christ's visible Church—the visible door by which we enter his household

and kingdom. This we are expressly taught by Christ himself in the 3d chap. of St. John's Gospel—" Except ye be baptised with *water*, and the Holy Ghost, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This is plain language. " The kingdom of God" here, must mean in its lowest sense, the visible church. This we cannot enter, without water baptism, as well as the baptism of the spirit. To baptise with the spirit, is the work of God; but to baptize with water is the business of his visible officers. God ever does all on his part. To those who are faithfully and devoutly obedient to his laws and institutions, he will grant every spiritual aid and qualification. This puts upon every one the necessity of complying with this institution, in order to be one of the fold of Christ, and it at the same time shows us, that this ordinance is the only seal of admission into his family. For if *without* baptism, " we *cannot enter*" the kingdom, and *with it* we *can*, nothing can be plainer than that this is the only way of admission.

These Sir, are the views which I have collected upon this question, from the scriptures, from the practice of antiquity, and indeed from the standards of almost every denomination in Chris-

tendom. These views I shall continue to entertain, unless some gentleman can afford me new light on the subject.

Presbyter Tertius. Sir, although I heartily accord with my Rev. Brother, in his views of the visible Church of Christ, I must beg leave to differ in opinion from him, in reference to membership. In my mind, it is a question whether water baptism constitutes membership therein or not, and I confess I am inclined to believe the contrary is the fact. I rather accord with some of our best writers, who teach us that baptism is to be administered only "to regularly received members of the Church."* That "baptism does not constitute membership," but that it consists in that faith and sanctification which are wrought by the word and spirit of God. Surely the gentleman will not go so far as to say, that the want of baptism will exclude from final salvation; and if it exclude not from the kingdom triumphant, it is a mystery to me why it should from the kingdom militant. It appears to me that the baptism of the spirit, should be placed above that of water, and that the latter should be considered as a *sign*, rather than a *seal* of admission into the church. It

*Ecclesiastical Catechism, p. 9.

is certainly undervaluing the grace of God, and his work in the soul, to place the visible ordinances in one sense above them or at least upon an equality with them. I wish to magnify the love of God, and to see it raised above every thing earthly. I am willing however to hear what can be advanced on the subject.

P. Primus. Sir I am as desirous " of magnifying the grace of God," as this Rev. Gentleman or any other man can be; but I am desirous of doing this in *God's* way, and not in *man's*. It is surprising to me that any man can think or talk of giving honor to his Redeemer, by mangling, distorting and rendering insignificant his *positive institutions*. Were this sacrament the ordinance of man—did it rest on a matter of opinion—we might then treat it with comparitive lightness. But when it is supported by facts—by indisputable scripture facts, when it is ordained by Christ's own words, when he expressly declares we cannot be members of his kingdom without it—is it not, instead of *magnifying his grace*, seriously detracting from that glory and honour due to him, to make his ordinance a bare ceremony ?

Christ declares in positive terms, ye cannot enter my kingdom without baptism. Some ap-

proaching him, say not *so* my blessed Lord;—this is not what you mean—you undervalue the influence of your blessed word and spirit, by making your *institutions* of such importance; your commands and institutions, and what your apostles said and did, must give way, that your grace may be magnified, and that you may give glory to yourself in another way, by sanctifying the soul—This baptism is too insignificant a thing—Our zeal for your honor and glory would have it to take a lower place in the Gospel system; we would have it instead of the *seal* to be the *ceremony*—the sign of membership, and not the instrument by which men are made members."

This if I understand it, is the reasoning of the gentleman, when reduced to plain language. But what is this but remonstrating with Christ; saying we know better about the business than you;—We have found out a better way to organize the system of Grace, than the one communicated to us in your word—One which will more directly redound to your glory, and will better promote your cause among men!

Still Sir, although my Rev. Brother has fallen into this mode of reasoning, I am not about to impeach his motives—I am satisfied they are good.

This mistake arises from the goodness of his heart. His faith directs him to spiritual things—to the Church triumphant. This he views with such zeal as to make him too indifferent, in reference to the institution of the Church militant.

The Rev. gentleman fully accords with us in the definition of the visible Church of Christ. He fully agrees, that it was organized by God himself; and if he would carry his ideas a step further, he would see that he should as sacredly regard the commands and institutions of his Saviour, in one respect as another—that a requisition in regard to a visible practicable duty, is as obligatory as to a spiritual exercise of soul.

God hath erected a visible kingdom in the world, which he styles his Church. This Church is a part of that system of Grace, in which he has provided for man's salvation. As we are social beings, he hath accommodated this part of his blessed system to our natures. This church is his visible school; to the members of which he grants his word and spirit, to enlighten their benighted minds; to the members of which he affords his heavenly impulse, to controul their wills, to warm and exalt their affections, and to sanctify their corrupt natures, that when he has done with them

here below, they may be capable of being received by him above.—The Church is in this way, termed the school of Christ—a school in which immortal beings, defective in their nature, may be renewed, and educated for eternity. This school is Christ's. He founded and supports it. Being visible, he has seen fit to appoint a visible way of admission unto it; and declares, as we have seen, that there is not nor shall be any other way. Now let this way be ever so plain, ever so simple, it is *Christ's* way, it is the apostolic way, it is the way by which all the primitive Christians entered.—And shall we presume to be wiser in this matter than apostles and martyrs ?—wiser than Christ himself?—Surely this would be an ungodly way of magnifying the grace of God !

No Sir, let us give proper reverence and honour to the visible institutions of Christ, and be contented to do what he commands. The great mistake on this subject appears to be this. Some men take the internal *qualification* of a good member of Christ's Church, to constitute membership in the visible community; when this is in no sense true, any more than that the good disposition of the heart of man, constitutes the man.

In order to be a Christian, a man must enter the

school of Christ by baptism; and in order to be a *good* Christian, he must obey not only this one command, of *entering* the school, but he must obey all the commands, and be regulated by all the maxims of the Gospel—He must live by faith, be moved by the spirit, and live a life of piety.

My Brother Presbyter says, "surely the gentleman will not go so far as to say, the want of baptism will exclude from final salvation." "And if it exclude not from the kingdom triumphant, it is a mystery to me *why it should* from the kingdom militant." To which I answer that we say no such thing. On this subject I say what I said in reference to the visible Church;—that I think, and I delight in the thought, that thousands of pious persons never baptised, will on account of their piety, be received into a happy immortality:—that honest error will be forgiven: that although they can in no sense be said to belong to the *visible* Church of Christ, because they have not been subjects of that only ordinance which Christ hath instituted to admit them; and although they have no convenant promise of salvation—still, that God is not bound by his promises, although we are, if acquainted with them; and that he may, as

we find he constantly does, dispense his favours to those without his covenant.

I have Sir, farther to remark upon what my Rev. Brother said respecting the opinion of some of our best writers on this subject, (viz.) that they supported the position, that baptism did not constitute membership. I must confess I was sorry to hear the remark, inasmuch as, although a few men have supported this position, still the standards of almost every Church in Christendom testify to the contrary. Even the standards of his own church use a language in express contradiction to the doctrine he contends for. Our Confession of Faith, p. 25, speaking of the sacraments, says they "put a visible difference between those who belong unto the church, and the rest of the world." And p. 128, it says Baptism is a sacrament of the New-Testament, ordained by Christ, not only for the solemn *admission* of the party baptised *into the visible Church*, but also to be unto him a *sign* and *seal* of the "covenant of Grace, of his ingrafting into Christ," &c.

The catechism of the Protestant Episcopal Church speaks in equally strong terms. The answer to the second question is, "my sponsors in baptism, wherein I was made a *member* of Christ"—

that is, a member of his visible body. "The Child of God"—that is, adopted into God's visible family—"and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven," that is, by covenant relation made an inheritor of the promises. The same language we find in the Heidleburgh Catechism 27th Lord's day—In Hellenbrook's Catechism p. 55, and in the Dutch Church Confession of Faith, article 34.

In short, there can be no question, but that all the standards of the Presbyterian, as well as other Churches—that all our best and most learned authors support the position, that baptism is the *only* door of admission into the visible Church of Christ.

I have dwelt the longer upon this point Sir, because I wished to give my Rev. Brother, distinct ideas of the views I entertain on the subject, and because I wished the question to be settled on the permanent grounds upon which the gospel has placed it.

Chairman. Are there any other gentlemen who have any remarks to make?

Doc. Bishop.—I have only to say Sir, that I have followed the Rev. Gentleman in his speech with equal pleasure and interest. Truly sad has been the havoc which has been made of the visible institutions of Christ by some modern writers,

and I do think the evil required an antidote. None certainly can be more effectual, than an appeal to Christ, his apostles, and the Christian Church. This, I am happy to observe, has been done in a very plain and logical manner by the gentleman who last spoke.

The question being now called for was put, when it was unanimously determined, that *Water baptism constitutes the only membership in the visible Church of Christ.*

ADJOURNED.

FOURTH DAY.

MET ACCORDING TO ADJOURNMENT.

Chairman. Gentlemen, we have progressed in the business before us to the final question, viz.

"*What is the precise nature of the constitution of the visible Church of Christ.* ?"

The assembly are now prepared to hear this interesting question discussed, and I do hope it may be settled with that clearness and precision, which have marked the decision of those already disposed of.

Presbyter Primus. Sir, my present impressions are, that this question is so decidedly settled in

the scriptures, that the business of this convention, may now soon be brought to a close. It is pretty generally granted, and has already been decided by this assembly, that the constitution of the Church of Christ is of divine authority and appointment. This constitution recognizes a priesthood, possessing powers to perpetuate the Church by ordination, and to govern the Christian community. It is the precise nature of this priesthood, ordained by Christ and perpetuated by succession, from him to the present day, that we are to enquire into. The question is not, whether there is such a priesthood, or whether it has been continued by succession. These questions are already settled. The question is, *what is the regimen of this priesthood? Are there grades of power in it, or does it consist of one order?* The latter, I presume, we shall find to be the true and apostolic constitution of the Christian ministry.

It is well known, that the Church of Rome, together with some others, sets up for an imparity in the ministry; but it must be recollected, that that church has sought out many new inventions. The question under consideration should be tried not by *her* example, nor by the example of any

other community of people, but by the only true standards, the scriptures, and antiquity. And what can be plainer sir, than parity in the ministry—than the presbyterian government of the Church, as held forth in the bible? There was indisputably an equality, as it respects authority, among the apostles. They ever acted in union, and never in any one instance claimed a superiority, one over the other. Those whom they ordained were *brethren*—were their equals. Timothy was in nothing below the apostle St. Paul, and he was ordained, not by a bishop, but "with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery," 1 Tim. iv. 14. His ordination was presbyterian in every sense of the word. If none but bishops might ordain, how came it to pass that the holy apostle St. Paul, encouraged this prominent instance of ordination by presbyters Presbyters are sometimes called bishops in the New Testament; and from this community of *names* it has been plead, that there was an higher order of church officers. But as bishops are sometimes called presbyters, as well as presbyters bishops, *we* may as well infer presbyterian government, as *others* episcopal—so that this community of names amounts to nothing. But the scriptures are not

alone upon this subject. The voice of antiquity supports the position which we have taken, and teaches us that there was no imparity in the ministry for at least 300 years from the days of our blessed Saviour. It is needless for me at present to adduce authorities—but they are at hand if necessity requires them.

To me Sir, this question appears so plain, that I deem it needless to enlarge upon it at present—I will only state what seems very evidently, to me, to be the true ministry and government of the Christian Church. It is this—In the apostolic age, every regularly organized congregation of christians were furnished with three classes of church officers; only one of these classes however, purely priestly, or empowered to administer the word and sacraments. The first of these classes consists of the bishops, or presbyters, or pastors; the second, of the ruling elders; and the third, of the deacons.

The bench of elders, with the pastor or bishop, as their standing moderator or president, constitutes the spiritual court, for directing all affairs purely ecclesiastical, in the congregation. These bishops of the several congregations, with a delegation from the eldership of each church, are to

convene in larger or smaller councils or synods, for the purpose of discussing and deciding great questions, and making general and particular arrangements, for the good and effectual governing of the Church.

This Sir, we conceive to be the precise constitution and order of the visible Church of Christ, as settled and practised on by the apostles. Hence saith St. Paul, "God hath set some in the church —first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers; after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps governments, diversities of tongues." Here Sir, are set forth a variety of orders, the three first, forming its whole economy and government, and precisely answering to the familiar statement I have already given; so that in the ministry, considered as such, there is a perfect equality of power and office; and these subordinate officers, ruling elders and deacons, are no more than a spiritual court for the advice and direction of the bishop, or pastor of the congregation.

I rest the question here Sir, not because I have exhausted the arguments it suggests, but because those I have stated are to my mind conclusive.

Doct. Bishop. It is with regret Sir, that I feel constrained, after concurring with the learned

gentleman who has just set down, in the sentiments he expressed on the two preceding questions, to differ with him on the present occasion. I am sorry to say I cannot conscientiously subscribe to the doctrines which he has just now advanced; not merely because they are opposed to those held by the venerable church to which I have the happiness to belong, but because I am under the full conviction, that they are not supported by scripture or antiquity. It appears to me Sir, (I wish to say it with all deference, and in the fulness of charity and decorum) it appears to me Sir, that the gentleman, however clear upon other subjects, labours under an honest error in this. But I am happy to hear him state the question to be discussed, so fully and fairly. I am pleased to hear him say, that the question is not "whether there be a priesthood; or whether it has been continued by succession;" but "*what is the precise regimen of the Christian priesthood? Are there grades of power in it, or does it consist of one order?*" This Sir, is the precise question.

The gentleman seems to be very positive that the apostolic regimen of the Church was a parity in the ministry—He intimates that the Church of

Rome introduced an imparity, and that others have followed her example ; but as he does not *insist* upon this, it will not be necessary at present, to go into an investigatiou of the subject.

The Rev. gentleman thinks " there was indisputably an equality as it respects authority among the apostles, and that Timothy was in nothing below the apostle St. Paul"—All this Sir, is readily granted—Nay, it has never been questioned by any man. But that Timothy was *not* ordained by a bishop, is a point which I shall not so readily grant. The gentleman could not have quoted a text from the Bible, more unfortunate for his cause than the one he has chosen. The case of Timothy, fairly understood, is a palpable fact, proving the imparity of the ministry in the apostolic age. But before we proceed to examine it as such, let us notice the specious argument which the Rev. gentleman has used, to prove that Timothy was a Presbyterian. He was ordained, not by a bishop, says he, " but with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." Very true, he was. In this case I request my learned friend to remember what he said respecting the " community of names." I readily grant, that it proves noth-

ing for *his* cause, nor for *mine*. Episcopalians lay no stress upon the term Bishop, as used in the Scriptures. They freely confess, that Bishops are there sometimes called Presbyters, and Presbyters Bishops. It is altogether a mistake, that we contend for Episcopal regimen upon that ground. It is the *powers* which we find exclusively lodged in the highest order of the ministry, on which all our arguments are founded. We say that there was in the apostolic age, and has been ever since, a grade in the ministry, superior to two others, possessing the power of ordaining and of governing the Church—that this grade of officers were sometimes called Bishops, at others Presbyters; and so they may be Sir, in the present day. Every Bishop is necessarily a Presbyter, and performs all the functions of Presbyters; but every Presbyter is not a Bishop.

Let us now apply the argument of the gentleman.

Bishops were called Presbyters: St. Paul says to Timothy, "neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the *Presbytery*." What is the inference? Why, that St. Paul, with several other Bishops or Presbyters, had consecrated

Timothy to the office of Bishop or Presbyter, and made him an officer like themselves. Still the gentleman says he was not ordained by a Bishop, but by *Presbytery*. Here he condemns us, by accusing us of using this community of names, to support our position; and immediately takes the same refuge himself, as the only support of his own cause. The gentleman says, Timothy was not ordained by a Bishop—surely he will not deny but that St. Paul was a Bishop; and this same St. Paul expressly enjoins Timothy, "stir up the gift of God which is in thee, *by* the putting on of *my* hands." From which the inference is undeniable, that St. Paul was himself the chief agent; the *actual ordainer* of Timothy. The Presbytery, whoever they were, whether Bishops in the peculiar sense, or mere Presbyters, only associated with the apostle, as concurring in the work.

But Sir, I have other evidence to offer, that Timothy was a Bishop, in the peculiar sense of the word, and superior to other Presbyters, who were at Ephesus. There certainly were Presbyters at Ephesus, before Timothy was sent there. At least five years before Paul wrote his epistle to Timothy, he sent from Miletus to Ephesus, for the "Elders of the Church." Let this fact be re-

membered, while we notice the power and duties of Timothy.

Timothy and Titus were sent expressly to "ordain elders in every city." We have seen that there were elders, or presbyters in Ephesus. Had these possessed the power of ordination, is it not extraordinary that *others* should be sent for that purpose, and that there should be no intimation given, that those already there could do it?

Further—It certainly appears that the church at Ephesus, was subjected to Timothy's *authority* —"Lay hands suddenly on no man." was an injunction to him.—That is, do not admit into the sacred ministry, any without due examination. Is there any one associated with Timothy in this injunction—any of those elders or presbyters who were there before him? None. They are not so much as named—and the evident reason is, that Timothy was an officer superior to them.

Again—The very maintenance of the elders, or presbyters, St. Paul entirely commits to Timothy. "Let the elders that rule well, be accounted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in word and doctrine." All writers agree that this is a charge to take care that the elders

be maintained. But there is no intimation that the elders are to be associated with him.

Again—St. Paul gave to Timothy authority to order Divine service—to see that all things were done decently and in order, in the Church—to give rules concerning Christian discipline—to take care that none be ordained who were novices—that women should go modestly appareled, should keep silence in the Church, and not teach—and that none should be admitted to the office of deacon without trial—nor any be raised to an higher office, who had not acquitted himself well in the deaconship.

Now to shew that all this was addressed to Timothy, as the head of the Church at Ephesus, the apostle thus selemnly concludes—"I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession, that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here the apostle plainly tells us, that the command relating to the above points, was given to Timothy for his direction and conduct in the Church of Christ; and that he of course would be responsible for the breach of it.

Now, Sir, if there are words in the whole compass of language, which can express episcopal powers—powers particularly appropriate to bishops in this day, we have them in the epistle to Timothy. His superiority over the Church at Ephesus, is as clear as the sun in the firmament. And that Timothy was the head of the extensive community of Christians at Ephesus—that he had the supreme controul of both ministers and people—that he possessed and exercised episcopal functions—is the point for which we contend. It is this which constitutes his epispocal character, and not any name or title which he bore. It matters not whether he was styled bishop, presbyter, apostle, or evangelist.

I have been more explicit Sir, u n this point, because of the great stress which the Rev. gentleman puts upon it.

I am astonished Sir, that the gentleman should appeal to antiquity for the support of parity in the ministry. Did Hooker, Bull, Pearson, Beveridge, Wake, Potter, Chillingworth and Leslie, as learned and pious men, as ever adorned the Christian Church, know nothing of antiquity; and after their intense labours, their deep research, after they have explored all the annals of Church histo-

ry and reported that imparity is the apostolical regimen of Church government, is it left for us of the year 1817, to announce to the world that these writers are all mistaken, and that the records of antiquity speak no such thing as they tell of? Is the authority which has so long been allowed to these luminaries of the Church, to be destroyed before this council by the fiat of a single presbyter, however respectable? I trust not Sir. Many of the records which these learned men explored are now extant. Ignatus Turtullean, Origen, Irenæus, Cyprian, and others of the first centuries, although dead, speak: and their united voice is, that there were no presbyterians in their day—that a parity in the ministry was then not known.

Before I conclude my observations, I have to remark Sir, upon the other quotation which the gentleman made, in support of Presbyterian parity.

It is the declaration of St. Paul, that "God hath set some in the Church—first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." These, says the gentleman, are institutions of God. This no one denies. But how the gentleman became so bewil-

dered as to quote it to maintain his plan of Church government, I am utterly at a loss. The first three, are, apostles, prophets and teachers. These no doubt are offices held by men—but the others, miracles, gifts of healing, &c. were *qualifications* which God, the great head of his Church, bestowed upon the stewards of his mysteries, for the effectual conviction of the world, and promulgation of his blessed gospel among men—Let us observe these three officers.

First apostles---We know what they were. They were the Governors of the Church. They were the first in rank—the first in power and office—they ordained, they ruled the Church. These were their *peculiar* powers—and hence were they called *Bishops*—They were in *their* age, in reference to office, what our Bishops now are. This the most superficial cannot but observe.

The second class of officers were *prophets*. What is the business of prophets as held forth in the New Testament? Their peculiar business was to proclaim the Gospel of salvation to men, and to enforce upon them divine truth. They are represented as a grade below the apostles, acting under them, but of a high priestly character. How does such character comport with that

of the ruling elders, who compose a part of this gentleman's system, and who are stationed, not upon the walls of Zion, proclaiming salvation, but in a kind of court, to assist and advise the presbyter, in his parochial business, and to accompany him as a kind of lay delegate to synods and assemblies? How precisely do these prophets answer the description of our presbyters, who are a second order in the ministry, and whose peculiar business always has been, to explain and enforce the Gospel of Christ, and to administer the holy sacraments when authorized by their Episcopal Head? I must confess I cannot perceive for what the gentleman quoted this passage—a passage in such direct hostility to his system.

The third office is teachers—a grade still below the former, whose business, as appears from their employment in the scriptures, and as explained by early writers, was to instruct converts, and to perform the lower duties of the ministry, answering in every respect to the deacons in the Protestant Episcopal Church. But are the gentleman's deacons after the pattern of these scripture teachers? I do not find that he has assigned them any particular duties; but whatever duties he may be pleased to assign them, I presume he will not

constitute them *teachers*, in as much as he declares them not a grade of the priesthood. This passage therefore, so far from supporting parity in the ministry, is a conclusive exemplification of the Christian regimen.

I shall not now Sir, detain the attention of this learned assembly longer. I rose, barely to defend that venerable Church to which I belong, against what I deem to be erroneous doctrines. I shall therefore forbear at this time, to state my ideas at large, on the constitution of the Christian Church, in as much as I wish not to appear illiberal or forward. I wish the subject to be candidly and gradually unfolded, that a fair and permanent conviction, may at last rest on the minds of all, let the final decision be what it may.

Presbyter Secundus. Sir, I had flattered myself with the hope that the argument on this question would not be diverted from its course, and this assembly insulted by the pretensions of Prelacy and high-toned Church principles. I was in hopes that the gentleman would be modest, and not in an uncharitable and outrageous manner, unchurch all denominations except those who have humbly bowed themselves to the sceptre of Prelacy. The

Right Rev. gentleman has yet, to be sure, only attempted to answer the arguments offered by my brother presbyter—But I can see he has not yet got to the end of his story—We shall presently see him stepping forward with bolder strides, and claiming the whole christian vineyard, endeavoring to shove out as intruders, every presbyterian. Indeed what he has already offered upon this subject. goes directly to do this. It goes to set himself safely in the Episcopal chair, and to dislodge every presbyterian from the christian ministry—to turn them out into the wide world of error, and to pronounce them pretenders and usurpers. Before the gentleman can be justified in uttering a syllable, which only looks towards such a conclusion, he should be perfectly certain of his premises. To unchurch with a lash of his tongue, all non-episcopalian denominations under heaven; and cast their members indiscriminately, into a condition worse than that of the very heathen, is, to say the least of it, a most dreadful excommunication; and if not clearly enjoined by the law of God, as criminal as it is dreadful. That all those venerable Churches which have flourished in Geneva, Holland, France, Scotland, England, Ireland, &c. since the reformation; and which have

spread, and are spreading through this vast continent—that those heroes of the truth, who, though they bowed not to the Mitre, rescued millions from the Man of Sin, lighted up the lamp of genuine religion, and left it burning with a pure and steady flame to the generation following—that all those faithful ministers, and all those private christians, who though not of the hierarchy, adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour, living in faith, dying in faith; hundreds, thousands of them going away to their Father's house under the strong consolation of the Holy-Ghost, with anticipated Heaven in their hearts, and its hallelujahs on their lips—that all, all were without the pale of the visible Church, were destitute of covenant grace, and left the world without any chance for eternal life, but that of unpledged, unpromised mercy, are facts of such deep-toned horror, as may well make our hair stand up "like quills upon the fretful porcupine," and freeze the warm blood at the fountain. We say this awful, this dreadful sentence, is the necessary conclusion to be drawn from the position which the Right Rev. Gentleman has taken.

Episcopacy Sir, is a bold inovation upon the original constitution of the Church—is an unpa-

rallelled usurpation of power by some presbyters, above their equals. It has been the scourge of the Christian world for several hundred years, and I am happy indeed, that the question is now subjected to the examination of this numerous, pious and learned body of men. I am determined to meet it with promptitude and decision—and since this Right Rev. gentleman has come forward with his high pretensions, and authoritative denunciations, I shall take the liberty, in order to bring the subject fairly before this assembly, that it may be fully investigated and settled, to state the accusations, which I think may be justly brought against Episcopacy—this child of Popery, and image of royalty.

I hold in my hand Sir, a paper containing those accusations, which I shall now read and endeavour to support.

Accusations brought against the assumed power in the Christian ministry termed Episcopal.

First. That the peculiar powers of Episcopacy should be discountenanced, in that they are a violation of the laws of Christian charity in unchurching all non-episcopalians.

Second. In that they were violently usurped in the third century.

Third. In that there is no express warrant for them in the scriptures—they no where say " thus said the Lord."

Fourth. In that they deny the scripture institution of ruling elders.

Fifth. In that they grew out of, and are an error of Popery.

Sixth. In that diocesan episcopacy is not to be supported by scripture or history, but puts it in the power of man to lord it over the heritage of God.

These Sir, I confess, are serious charges to be brought against a christian community, but charges to me so evidently true, that I should feel myself guilty of violating the sacred relation, which binds me to my God and Saviour, if I did not distinctly state and boldly enforce them.

The Right Rev. Gentleman and others, will be at liberty, if they see fit, to follow me in my arguments; so that in this way I conceive the subject will be more distinctly understood and satisfactorily settled.

Chairman. Sir, I must be permitted to interrupt you. You have set out very zealously, and I must take the liberty to say somewhat intemperately upon this subject. You have struck out

an entire new plan of investigation; a plan, to say the least, bearing with severity upon a respectable and numerous body of Christians, and fitly calculated to excite more warmth than should be felt in the discussion of such a subject. Before therefore, you are permitted to proceed, the sense of the assembly, and especially of those against whom your charges are levelled, should be had. It should be known whether they agree to your proposed manner of investigating the important question now under consideration.

Doct. Bishop. Sir, the gentleman has my most cordial assent, to the manner in which he has proposed to investigate the subject. He is at perfect liberty to choose his own mode of assailing the church to which I have the happiness to belong—I know not that it matters how the attack is brought, whether with the finer graces of decorum, or the coarseness of intemperate denunciation. His manner and measures were to be sure unexpected, but against them I shall offer no objection. As he has promised me the favor of following him, I shall most likely improve it, and risk the cause of Episcopacy on that foundation, upon which I am confident it has ever stood—upon *scripture* and *antiquity*.

I wish therefore the gentleman may be permitted to proceed.

Chairman. I have no special objection to the consideration of the accusations which the Rev. gentleman has read, other than that the proposed manner entirely alters the nature of the proceedings, from a popular investigation, to a kind of special trial ; thereby rendering my situation more delicate and accountable, by constituting me a kind of Judge, on special charges brought against a particular class of the Christian community. If therefore these accusations be tried, I shall insist that twelve gentlemen be chosen, from the various denominations of christians present, and associated with me as a kind of Jury.

Presbyter Primus. It is presumed there can be no possible objection to such a measure.

Doct. Bishop. None.

The gentlemen were immediately selected from among the most learned and pious of the assembly, and the court new formed, consisting of the Chairman, or Judge, and twelve Jurors.

Chairman. Gentlemen, we are now prepared to go into an investigation of the several charges which have been read. In calling your attention to this, I deem it my duty to remind you of that

de corum and fairness of enquiry, which has hitherto marked most of our proceedings, upon these momentous and interesting topics. We hope that while gentlemen ardently contend for the truth, they will strive to temper their zeal with all that love and affection which belongs to religious enquiry.

The first charge is, "*that the peculiar powers of Episcopacy should be discountenanced, in that they are a violation of the laws of christian charity, in unchurching all non episcopalians.*"

Presbyter Secundus. Sir, it is scarcely necessary for me to utter a syllable in support of the justness of this charge. The well known fact, that Episcopalians set up Episcopal regimen as the only true and divine authority—that they teach, that there can be no true Church without it, and that all non-episcopalians are running in the wide road of error—are denounced as aliens from the commonwealth of the visible Israel, and are without hope of salvation, except upon the ground of uncovenanted mercy, is sufficient of itself to rouse every feeling of sensibility, to awaken the deepest sense of detestation, if not against the persons, at least against the cold, unfeeling principles which influence them. Shall non-episcopalians, in the

full enjoyment of their holy religion—christians who "have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come"—christians who shine as lights in the world—shall such christians feel it no hardship to be insulted with a declaration, that they have left the true fold of Christ by deserting the Hierarchy—that *their* priesthood is *no* priesthood, any more than Korah, Dathan, and Abiram's was—that their ministry acts by human authority only; that the divinity of the priesthood is all lodged in the bishop, and that without him there can be no church, no ordination, and finally no persons actually belonging to the visible Church of God. What a sweeping system is this? a system which demolishes at one stroke all the glories of the presbyterian cause, and levels all her noble churches with the dust! If this is not entering the most holy sanctuary of charity, and violating her most sacred maxims, I know not what is.—Uncharitableness exercised against individual persons bears no comparison to this; for it denounces and unchurches without a single salvo, whole communities of people, and outrageously robs them of their dearest privileges and enjoyments, without any hope or refuge, except that of rushing into the arms of Episcopacy. I can

read in the countenances of these brethren around me, that manly detestation they feel, at the bare mention of this unrivalled assumption of power, and this hard hearted denunciation of brethren in Christ.

I feel that I can safely risk this charge, upon the support which it receives from every man, in the least influenced by the principles of Christian love. I shall therefore cheerfully submit it to the decision of the gentlemen, whom I have the happiness to address.

Doc. Bishop. Gentlemen, I am surprised that the Rev. gentleman who has but now addressed you—a gentleman of his superior powers of mind, and of his great acquirements, should take the position he has upon this charge, against which I have the honor of defending my Church.

When this charge was announced, and announced with the assurance of support from a quarter so formidable, I confess I trembled at the consequences—not however under a sense that the charge itself was just, or that it could for a moment be sanctioned by this judicious and learned assembly. My fears originated from another quarter. It is well known to you gentlemen, that the sympathies of the multitude are instantly ex-

cited on the cry of uncharitableness and persecution; that an accusation of this nature runs "like wild fire," among the great mass who think little and reason less, and who are powerfully controuled by positive assurance and popular harangue, especially when thus addressed by persons of high standing and commanding powers. This was the source of my fears. These fears however dissipated as the Rev. Gentleman proceeded in his remarks. Suppose the "well known fact," on which the gentleman founds his attack were undisputed by Episcopalians. It would be evident to the most superficial understanding, that the high accusation brought by the gentleman, could not be sustained by such fact, unless Episcopalians were first convinced that they were in an error themselves. Let it be taken for granted Sir, that Episcopalians think and declare that there can be no true Christian ministry, without Episcopal authority—that it is the only and true Apostolic regimen of church government, and still it will be impossible to sustain the charge of illiberality or unchurching against them.

I cannot illucidate this subject more satisfactorily than by repeating the arguments used by the Rev. P. Primus (which were cordially approbated

by the Rev. gentleman who now makes this charge) when vindicating himself and his Church against the same accusation. He says "I deny the charge of unchurching all, and consequently of uncharitableness. In examining this question we are in search of truth—we are seeking into matters of fact." This gentlemen, I affirm of the principal question now in dispute. We are endeavoring to ascertain the precise nature of the constitution of the Christian ministry. One party affirm it to be Episcopal another Presbyterian. The question is to be tried, and the matter of fact fairly settled. How childish then in either of the parties, to rise up and cry, "denunciation—persecution—uncharitableness?" Said the Rev. Gentleman already quoted, when pleading against the like accusation, "we are seeking into matters of fact—facts stated in the scriptures and other authentic history. If in the examination of these authorities, it should evidently turn out, that I am not a lawful minister of Christ—that I have not my authority from him through his Apostles—I say, if it should so turn out, I shall not be *unchurched*, for in that case, it will appear that I never have *been churched*. I should be sorry that it *should* so turn out—but I had rather it should *be so* than not

know the truth at all. For when I know it, if I have been wrong, I can become right. Truth will be truth Sir, be the professors never so few." Continues he, " If I am out of the Church, thousands of brethren in the same condition, will not help me; and it would be the greatest charity in any one of these brethren, if he knew the fact, to acquaint me with my error. And would it not be equally charitable, in one who knew he was in the Church, to undeceive me ? The Apostle says " we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." So should *we* say. If this numerous and learned council, should a thousand times decide, that certain congregations are Churches of Christ, and that certain ministers, are duly authorized, if they are not so, our decisions can never make them so. Christ's Church was founded by Christ—is supported by Christ—and all the decisions of all the men upon earth, can never make a Church any more than they can make a world.

Would it be uncharitable in any man, who knew I was so unfortunate as not to be a member of Christ, when *I thought* I was—would it be uncharitable to undeceive me ? . Every man says, no. My having been for years, or my ancestors having been for centuries in the error, alters not

the case--Error is error still, though ever so venerable by age or amiable by virtue. Should a gentleman making a journey, to a particular place, be met by either of us proceeding on a road leading in a different direction, and to a different place, on what principle could it be accounted uncharitable, to apprize him of his mistake? Nay, suppose this whole assembly were present, and should assure him he was in the right road; would that make it so? Would it be turning the traveller *out of his journey* to put him in the *right way*? It certainly would not. No, nor would it be unchurching a community of people, to point out their error—to show them that they were in the world, by showing them the Church of Christ. So far from leading them from it, it would be introducing them into the fold in which they *thought* they were, and into which they should above all things desire to be. No Sir, this cry of unchurching and uncharitableness, is a mistake—is entirely unfounded." This reasoning gentlemen is to me conclusive. And unless using it in behalf of an Episcopalian, renders it of less force than when it is imployed in favour of a Presbyterian, it must be conclusive with the Rev. Gentleman, who has accused Episcopacy of this sin of denunciation and

uncharitableness. Every one perceives that this reasoning applies precisely to the case before us. And although the gentleman saw, or thought he saw, in the countenances of the gentlemen around him, " a manly detestation," still I am prepared to submit the decision of this high accusation, not only to you Sir, and to this honorable Jury, but to the voice of this whole assembly ; and should it finally prove, that Episcopacy cannot support its claims against Presbytery, and Episcopalians should still continue to assert them, then will any gentleman be entirely at liberty to renew the accusation.

Presbyter Primus. I am convinced Sir, that this subject has been sufficiently investigated and for myself, wish the Chairman and Jury may decide it.

P. Secundus. The question is submitted.

The Chairman having ascertained the sentiments of the Jury, proclaimed to the assembly, that he and the jurors were unanimons in their judgment, that Episcopacy was not chargeable with the offence alledged, and that it ought to be exonerated therefrom.

Chairman. Gentlemen, the second charge brought against Episcopalians is, " *that they as-*

sumed the Episcopal power in the third century." We are now ready for its examination.

P. Tertius. However ill-timed and improper in itself the first charge, I trust this is founded upon such evidence, that it will not be difficult to substantiate it. It is well known that Popery was not an Apostolic institution, but a corruption of power, assumed some centuries after the Apostolic age. I conceive Episcopacy to be a grade of the same power, and that it crept gradually into the Church in the third century. The causes which then operated to do away the true regimen of Church government—the divinely instituted Presbytery—were the indolence and the inconsideration of some, the ambition of others; the custom of standing moderators; and the veneration paid to senior ministers, and such as were of superior talents and influence; the respect attached to such as resided in large cities, and other considerations of a similar kind. It is not to be denied that in the third century, that zeal which characterized the Apostles and first ministers; that wakeful diligence which we in every case find in the first stewards of the sanctuary, began to abate in some who were called to the spiritual work. In other words, the Church began to be corrupt;

and the love of the world and the pride of life, in many instances took the place of the love of God. Ambition with her unbridled desires, rode forth into the vineyard of our God and Saviour. When these corruptions had crept into the Church, we are to remember that the synods and assemblies were conducted with presidents at their heads; and that there were standing moderators in the larger synods; that these presidents and moderators were of the senior Presbyters, venerated for their age and standing; these too would be naturally chosen from among those of the greatest talents and influence, and the most ambitious in the larger cities, by whom the greatest respect is demanded, and to whom it is invariably paid.—These men, inflated with their promotion and success; their ambition warmed by power and station; standing at the head of the Christian community, they would have a commanding influence over the Church; they would pretty naturally desire to make their station immoveable; and by the joint exertions of several of these ambitious heads, each controuling the Presbyters under him, might gradually with little effort, as they actually did, establish a Prelacy, and hand it down to their successors. In this way, through

ambition and corruption, did Episcopacy creep into the Church, and finally in this way did the Pope ascend his throne, in his plentitude of power, and spread darkness, dismay and death through all the kingdoms of Christendom. This Sir, is the language of ancient history. Take the authority of Jerome. He says, that Bishops and Presbyters were the same under the Apostles—that before there were by the devil's influence, parties in religion, the churches were governed by the common council of Presbyters, but afterwards the practice was introduced, of placing one of the Presbyters above the rest, as a remedy against scism. He further says, that this practice was brought in by little and little. He asserts that Presbyters were above Presbyters, more by the custom of the church, than by the appointment of Christ; and that this change owed its origin to the decay of religion, when every one began to think that those whom he baptized were rather *his* own than Christ's."

I appeal to your candor, my brethren, whether there can be any plainer and more satisfactory proof than this, that Episcopacy was an innovation of man. Again, Gregory says, " would to God there was no Prelacy, no pre-eminence of place—no

tyrannical privileges." Would Gregory, an eminently pious and learned Bishop wish this, my brethren, if he believed Prelacy to be of divine appointment ?

Origen says, "I think that which is written concerning the sellers of doves, to agree to those who commit the Churches to *greedy*, *tyrannical*, *unlearned*, and *irreligious Bishops*, *Presbyters*, and Deacons."

These, gentlemen, are quotations from authors who cannot be disputed. Many others of the like nature might be adduced from almost every age, subsequent to the third century. This being the fact, it renders the statement which I have given of the rise of Episcopacy, incontrovertable. The power then having been thus usurped, the act is an outrage upon that ministry which Christ established in the time of his Apostles and their successors, and should therefore be discountenanced.

Presbyter Secundus. Gentlemen, I have been gratified with the explanation which has been given of the charge under consideration, and the reasons which have been urged in support of it. Our Brother has very dispassionately and calmly examined the subject, and placed it in such a light as that none can be in doubt respecting the true state of

the question. I am aware however, that the gentleman may urge on the other side that there is no history in support of this charge—that no writer of that age in so many words, asserts that such a change in the constitution of the Church did take place, and none in the next century except Jerome. Anticipating this plea, I rose for the purpose of clearing this point of what may be supposed its difficulties. It must be remembered that the principal writers of that day, were those distinguished men, who were at the head of the Church, whose corruptions and whose ambition lead them to change the divinely constituted Presbytery for Prelacy. And they, being the authors of the deed, and the historians of the age, would be careful not to record the fact, because by so doing they would record their own *shame*. What few other writers there were in that age, being of minor influence when compared with these usurpers, they would by fear or by favours be pressed into silence, so that *they* might not be expected to record their master's shame. The silence therefore of writers respecting the fact itself, is easily accounted for. The error continually mounted upwards, until it seated itself on the Popish throne—and as it ascended, it obscured the truth and buried the record of the

fact in its gloom. But wherever or however retained, whether in the Pope, or in its more comely form, in Episcopacy, it is still the error of the third century and must give way to the divine institution of Presbytery

Doc. Bishop. Gentlemen, I confess the Rev. Gentlemen who have stepped forward in the support of this high accusation, are by no means wanting in ingenuity, in the formation of systems to suit their purposes. They have certainly given a very pretty and plausible account of the rise and progress of Episcopacy ; and have so artfully connected it with Popery, that it is not a wonder that they are so confident of success; and were all knowledge of Scripture and antiquity treasured up in the minds of these Rev. Gentlemen, they would no doubt come off with triumph, and bury the Episcopal community in the disgrace of their reproaches. I am indeed sorry that gentlemen will condescend to use reproach instead of argument in support of their cause. Little did I expect that the hackneyed slang, so much used about the period of the American revolution, would ever be revived. At that time it was in the mouth of every enemy to her welfare, that the Episcopal Church was a child of Popery ; that her rites and

ordinances, her worship, and her government, were but a step removed from the corruptions of the Church of Rome. Then it was, that she was cried down as a child of royalty; as craving a throne, and of dangerous influence; that she possessed neither piety or virtue, and that her worship was a dry formality." Many in my presence can testify with what diligence and what clamor Episcopacy was assailed, and it is well known that these things had a surprizing and almost overwhelming effect. She was for years in a state militant. But God, who has promised to save his Church, helped her in her distress. He blessed the labours of her faithful servants—The fallacy of the accusations brought against her being exposed, hundreds who had been deluded by the cry rushed into her bosom.

I repeat it, therefore, that it is with pain I hear gentlemen renewing the cry which has more than once terminated in the shame of those who raised it. The manner however in which the Rev. Gentlemen have wove Episcopacy and Popery together in their system, and the plausibility which by a kind of historical legerdemain, they have given their statement, deserves attention. I shall therefore improve this opportunity of examining it.

Let us first notice the singularly shrewd manner in which the gentlemen get over the silence of history, in reference to their pretended change of Presbyterian to Episcopal regimen. "The usurpers," they say, "were the historians of the age, and they would not record the fact, for thereby they would record their own shame." Surprizing shift to save a bad cause! And were these violent usurpers of the priesthood—these corrupt moderators, who had transformed themselves into Bishops—were they the *only* historians of that day? What gentleman of learning will venture his reputation on such a declaration? Was the eloquent Turtullian one of the usurpers? Was he one of those greedy, ambitious, corrupt Bishops, who thirsted for Papal dominion? No. He was a mere Presbyter. He was in no danger of recording his own shame. Nor was he one of a little mind, a tame spirit, or minor influence, who was to be subdued by fear or favour. In his various writings, has he left no hint of this anti-Christian usurpation? No. Would he have recorded his own shame? Nay, gentlemen, has not this Presbyter, who had every motive to brand with infamy these usurpers, declared in the most explicit terms, that all spiritual power is derived from Episcopal or-

dination ? That neither Presbyter nor Deacon has any right to baptize without the Bishop's authority ? Does he not challenge the heretics to produce a list of their Bishops ? What could have induced Turtullian to be silent with respect to this usurpation if it had ever existed ? Or rather, what could have induced him to assert such a shameless falsehood, as that Episcopacy was of Apostolical institution, if it were not a notorious fact ? We hear no remonstrance from him ; but we hear him on the contrary, declare, that the Apostles left three orders in the Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

We have the same testimony from the profoundly learned Origen. He also was a Presbyter, and therefore one of the sufferers under this unchristian domination. He too had a peculiar motive for unmasking the imposition. He conceived himself to be ill-treated by his Bishop : yet irritated as he was, he declares Episcopacy to be of divine appointment. Did he not know how the matter was ? Was he an idiot, or a knave ? Was he afraid to tell the truth, or had he any motive for telling a falsehood ? Gentlemen, we have got to a strange pass if we attempt to impose such fictions upon mankind.

But why are christian Bishops to be excluded from bearing their testimony in favor of Episcopacy ? Oh ! say the gentlemen, " they were the usurpers, and of course could not record their own shame. Was Ignatius an usurper ? Does the man who had been forty years Bishop of Antioch, who had been ordained to that office by Apostolic imposition of hands, and who encountered, for the sake of Christ, death in one of its most horrid forms, deserve that character ? Did he, virtuous and pious as he was, go out of the world with a lie in his mouth ? Did this martyr, who declares over and over again, that the office which he bore was of divine institution, record his own shame ?

Was Polycarp, the venerable and pious Bishop of Smyrna, one of those usurping Prelates ? He must have had a principal hand in the business, if Blondell *guesses* right ; for Polycarp lived at the very time, when Blondell says this flagitious revolution was effected. He, by recommending in the strongest terms, the epistles of Ignatius, asserts the divine right of Episcopacy. Did he go out of the world triumphing in the flames, and exulting in the hope of happiness, when he had upon his soul the guilt of destroying that sacred regimen

which Christ left in his Church ? Such suppositions, gentlemen, are revolting to common sense,

The Rev. gentleman therefore, instead of clearing away the difficulties, has but barely glossed them over with a superficial, a supposed 'shame.' It is impossible that a fact of such moment should have transpired, and still not a trace of history be left, which records it ; and at the same time, the most pious, the most learned of every age, testifying a contrary truth. Jerome, the writer whom the gentleman quotes with so much triumph, says no such thing, as we shall directly show. And even if he did, when the voice of all antiquity is expressly against him, his authority should be taken with great caution. The Rev. gentleman has presented us with some quotations, which, as they have the appearance of a history of the fact alledged, deserve to be noticed.

Let us calmly examine the quotation which he has so triumphantly imtroduced from Jerome. In the first place this passage must be considered at best obscure and doubtful.

Jerome says that Bishop and Presbyter were the same under the Apostles. This I grant. But does it follow that there was no office superior to this order. As a logician, the gentleman will cer-

tainly not say it does. Who then were the superior officers ? I answer the Apostles. What does Jerome next say ? That before there were, by the devil's influence, parties in religion, the Churches were governed by the common council of Presbyters." Here Jerome must be understood, in order not to contradict the Scriptures, to mean, that the Presbyters governed the Churches, in subordination to the Apostles. *All this says every Episcopalian.* Afterwards, says Jerome; after this distraction at Corinth, when one said I am of Paul, I of Appollos—to prevent the seeds of scism, one of the Presbyters was set over the rest. Now as Jerome says, one of the Presbyters was placed over the rest, to prevent the scism, which took place at Corinth, if we allow him common sense, it cannot be supposed he meant to assert, that the remedy was not applied till two or three hundred years after the evil begun. According to him then, Bishops were introduced in the Apostles' day, which is all Episcopalians claim. Jerome further says, that this superior order among the clergy was introduced by little and little." This too is perfectly consistent with the notions of the most high-toned Episcopalian. As the labors of the Apostles increased, and it became impracticable

for them to superintend the numerous Churches which they had planted—they gradually placed men over these Churches with the same majority of power which they themselves had exercised. So that I do not see, but that I may as triumphantly quote this passage, as the Rev. Gentleman, who thought it so pointedly supported his cause.

Let us now examine his second quotation. Gregory says, "would to God there were no Prelacy—no pre-eminence of place—no tyrannical privileges." To this quotation the gentleman subjoins this question—Would an eminently learned and pious Bishop, have spoken thus, if he had considered Prelacy of divine appointment? To this question I answer without hesitation, Yes. He might have thus spoken in perfect consistency with the belief, that Episcopacy was of divine origin.

Mr. Chairman, the gentleman's whole reasoning on the subject is entirely fallacious. Bishops have abused their authority, therefore the office is not of divine appointment. Whither will not this sophistry lead us?

I would seriously ask the gentleman, what are his views in giving us this quotation from Gregory? Surely not to make him a Presbyterian.

Gregory does not wish that there were no Bishops, but that there was no pre-eminency amongst Bishops. Such is my apprehension of his language. It is extremely unfair and uncandid, to quote from writers expressions like these, to prove the rise of Episcopacy; when the least attention to the same writers, would make it evident, beyond contradiction, that they believed in the divine *right* and *succession* of Episcopal regimen, and were only in those expressions, alluding to a pre-eminence which early began to obtain among Bishops, as such. From Bingham's history, we have abundant evidence of the rise of Metropolitans. They were presidents of the house of Bishops—were *heads* of the Bishops and of an whole province; and frequently presided as such, in the councils of the Church. Continues Bingham, these Metropolitans were in after ages called Arch Bishops and Patriarchs. Now the early writers frequently speak of this pre-eminence among *Bishops*; and while they constantly affirm, that there were three orders in the ministry—that Bishops, Priests and Deacons were appointed to the Church by Christ and his Apostles, and of course of divine authority, they at the same time inform us, that this pre-eminence in the highest

order (viz.) the distinguishing character of the *Metropolitan*, of the *Archbishop* or *Patriarch*, had its rise in the necessities and customs of the Church, and not from divine appointment. And this Sir, is what every Episcopalian declares.

Unhappily perhaps for the Church, after the Roman empire became Christian, some undue privileges were conferred on some Bishops, by the civil power in large Cities, and these privileges, have in many instances, been a scourge to the Church. I believe it to be such on the Island of Great Britain now. It was this pre-eminence of place—of privilege, which the civil power conferred; this was the pre-eminence against which Gregory exclaims; and against which every man may exclaim, and still be a confirmed and zealous Episcopalian.

In the English Church, there are particular titles, privileges and powers, conferred on certain Bishops by the civil power, and in this way the church and kingdom are united. This was formerly the case in Rome, and of this Gregory complains. But these titles, powers, and privileges form no part of Episcopacy, as such. It is only a mixing of the government of the church with the civil government of the particular country where

it happens to be stationed—But this is an addition of civil powers to the divine priesthood, which in no sense belongs to it. Against this many Episcopalians have exclaimed in every *age*, since the priesthood has condescended to be thus tramelled. But non-Episcopalians, in quoting these remonstrances, against *civil power* and *titles*, to disprove the *divine institution* of Episcopacy; make not only Origen, but almost every other writer of eminence in the past centuries, contradict themselves in the most explicit terms.§

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§ The *spiritual Church of England*, if I may so speak, and the *civil Church of England*, are entirely distinct; and I cannot more safely or more perspicuously express this distinction, than in the language of one of the most eminent prelates who has adorned that Church. "To the Prince or to the law, (says Bishop Horsley,) we are indebted for all our secular possessions; for the rank and dignity annexed to the superior order of the Clergy; for our secular authority; for the jurisdiction of our courts; and for every civil effect which follows the exercise of our spiritual authority. All these rights and honours with which the priesthood is adorned by the piety of the civil magistrate, are quite *distinct from the spiritual commission which we bear, for the administration of Christ's Kingdom* They have no necessary connexion with it; they stand merely on the ground of human law." *

The spiritual Church of England we are proud to resemble. Falsied be my heart and my tongue, when the one ceases to beat with gratitude to her, and the other to speak her praises. The spiritual Church of England we resemble in all essential points of doctrine, discipline, and worship But with the civil Church of England we totally differ; and the difference consists in non-essential points of discipline.

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* *Horsley's charge to his Clergy when Bishop of St. David's.*

I shall now adduce a few authorities from the writers preceding the age in which the alledged usurpation took place. If we find Episcopacy *then* extant and universally received, the question must of necessity be settled, because the evil complained of could not be prevalent before it had an existence. Ignatius who was the disciple of St. Peter, and according to the ancients, wasordained by him, Bishop of Antioch, in the Epistle which he wrote on his way to martyrdom, saith, what is the Bishop but he that hath all authority and

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Her spiritual Episcopacy and ministry; her orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, we possess; we are proud to possess them These constitute our claim to the character of an Apostolic Church. But we differ from her in our Clergy enjoying no temporal powers; in our Church being no farther related to the State, than as amenable to its laws, and protected by them; and in her being destitute of those inferior offices of Arch-Deacons, Deans, Prebends and others, which are only of human institution" I may securely (says Hooker) therefore, conclude, that there are, at this day, in the Church of England, no other than the same degrees of ecclesiastical orders, namely, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons, which had their beginning from Christ and his blessed Apostles themselves. As for Deacons, Prebendaries, Parsons, Vicars, Curates. Arch-Deacons, Chancellors, Officials, Commissaries, and such other like names, which being not found in Holy Scripture. we have been thereby, through some men's error, thought to allow of ecclesiastical degrees not known, nor ever heard of, in the better ages of former times; all these are in truth but titles of office. whereunto partly ecclesiastical persons, and partly others, are in sundry forms and conditions admitted, as the state of the Church doth need, degrees of order still continuing the same they were from the first beginning."*

BISHOP HOBART'S CHARGE.

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* *Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. Sect. 78.*

power? What is the Presbytery but a sacred constitution of counsellors and assessors to the Bishops? This gentlemen, is testimony as explicit as words can make it, and is derived from the Apostolic age. About seventy years from that age flourished Ireneus, who thus speaks—"We, says he, can reckon up those whom the apostles ordained Bishops in the several Churches, and who they were that succeeded them, down to our times. Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, who lived about the same time, certifies the same thing. See also Arch-Bishop Potter. Other authorities of the like nature might be produced from these ages, but surely candour will be satisfied with these.

To suppose that events could there be spoken of as notorious in the Church, for centuries before they took place, would be contrary to every principle of common sense. The fact is so notorious, and is so fully recorded by every early writer, that Episcopacy was the regimen of the Church in the first and second centuries, that it will be in vain for any man to pretend that it took its rise after that period.

Against the supposition that the powers which Bishops exercise by long and immemorial usage,

were originally an usurpation, there is an argument which even with any candid Presbyterian must be conclusive. If Episcopacy were an usurpation—if the power of the Bishops, like that of the Pope, was anti-Christian and unscriptural, would not the illustrious Reformers have denounced Episcopacy with as much zeal as they did Popery? To suppose that they would not, is to impeach at once their talents and their sincerity. The *hierarchy in its various modifications*, was an object of jealousy, of close, bold, and unrestrained investigation; and the primitive writers were faithfully explored, in order to test its pretensions. If under these circumstances, the Reformers, while they denounced the Pope as "anti-Christ," "the man of sin, the son of perdition, not only refrained from censuring Episcopacy, but spoke of such an Episcopacy as the Church of England possesses, in the most respectful terms, I think the conclusion is irresistible, that Popery and Episcopacy are not equally untenable. The fact is as remarkable as it is undeniable, that the great Reformers, Calvin and Reza; and other divines of the reformed Churches on the continent of Europe, in opposing the hierarchy, opposed only the *corrupt* hierarchy of the Church of Rome; ap-

proved in the strongest language of a *primitive Episcopacy*, such as the Church of England possessed, and lamented the imperious circumstances which deprived them of it.*

The Rev. Gentleman seems to rest much of his fine theory, on the desire of pre-eminence which he intimates is natural to man. A wish of pre-eminence is *natural*, when it brings with it, its usual gratifications; but where is the man who wishes it, when it brings in its train every thing appalling to human nature—a brief spiritual authority, such as the early Bishops possessed, generally accompanied with bonds, imprisonment, and death in the most horrible forms, has very few charms, even to those in whose breasts the love of power operates strongly—It would be the height of folly to suppose, that any Presbyters, however inordinate their ambition, or corrupt their motives, would wish such distinction on the rack and at the stake, or that they would usurp stations, where relentless persecution would inevitably assail them. No, human nature loves itself too well, for that kind of distinction. Yet this was the situation of the Christian Bishops in the first centuries. They were not supported, but in most ca-

* *Calvin's book concerning the necessity of reforming the Church.*

ses depressed by the civil power. They had no Demosthenes or Cicero to plead their cause. They had to fight the battles of Christ, frequently against principalities and powers—and not unfrequently died in the conflict. And still these Bishops are charged with profligacy, and ambitious usurpation.

It is universally acknowledged that the Church, until the middle of the second century, preserved her piety. This was but a short time previous to the alledged usurpation by her Presbyters. The Bishops of this very age, are recorded as displaying all the meekness and humility of Christians. And can it be supposed that these men, who would not offer incense at the idol altars, to save themselves from the most excruciating torments, deliberately associated for the purpose of acquiring a trifling authority over their brethren, at the expense of an institution of their Lord and Master? What! conscientious in every thing relating to Christian purity—to Christian manners; and yet profligate as to the constitution of the Christian Church! Gross inconsistency!

But gentlemen, suppose this chimerical plan, of depriving the Presbyters of those powers to which they were entitled by the appointment of

their Lord and Master, should have entered into the minds of a few ambitious Presbyters, how in the name of common sense, was it to be effected? They possessed not the civil power to drive, nor the eloquence of Cicero to persuade, men out of their senses. How then did they effect so important, so outrageous a change? How did they cover the fatal deed, that it produced no remonstrance, no opposition? Nay, how did they blot the remembrance of it from the mind, that it should lie buried for centuries, and be finally permitted to pass until after the Reformation before thought of or discovered?

The truth is that the ancients had much greater advantages for determining the question under consideration, and every other important matter relating to the Church, than we can possibly have. They had not only all the writings that we have, but a great many more. They had a great number of epistles, written by Synod to Synod—by Bishops to Bishops—by Churches to Churches, about all things that happened, in which either the government or the discipline of the Church was interested. From all which manuscripts and records, they might as fully have learned what was the government instituted by the Apos-

tles, and whether *substantial* innovations had been made in it, as *we* can learn by the records of the fifth and sixth centuries, what the form of government was in those centuries. Indeed gentlemen, it is impossible that this usurpation. even if effected in one province, should have extended itself throughout the world, at a period, when the secular power would not have enforced it—and when there was no general council to effect it. I repeat it—had this usurpation happened there would have been explicit, irrefragible facts recorded in cotemporary writers of a change, which if effected by general consent, must have given new features to the visible Church, and constituted one of its most memorable eras. And where, we ask, is the record of a change, which if effected by *usurpation*, must have rallied clergy and people around their just rights, consecrated by Apostolic authority, and called forth at least from some one degraded Presbyter, a solemn protest, which would have been heard through distant climes to distant ages. Where the " voice of warning," which, even in this degenerate day, poured forth the alarm in Zion, when danger only remotely threatened her sacred cause. Alas ! the inhabitants of Zion, lay locked in deadly slumber.

The centinels on her sacred ramparts, were sleeping at their posts. The enemy came. No blast from the gospel trumpet swept over Zion to rouse her members in defence of her Apostolic order. Presbytery, her revered pride and glory, vanished. A corrupt Prelacy raised its hideous form—Christians *throughout the world*, who but a century or two before, had received Presbytery as a sacred deposit from Christ and his Apostles, as if touched by the wand of enchantment, fell down and worshipped the image, which the pride and ambition of usurping Prelates had set up! And more astonishing still, the pen of history neglecting its office, left to future ages no traces of this wonderful event! The man who can believe that this astonishing change in Apostolic order, could have been universally effected within a short period of the Apostolic age, without being fully, explicitly, and lastingly recorded in the writings of that period, which are still extant, must be prepared to believe that all the Presbyteries now in the world, may lie down to sleep, and wake up under the government of Bishops, and yet that no record would be left to inform posterity of the astonishing event.

Chairman. It appears to me gentlemen that

this charge is, in its nature, incapable of being sustained. I cannot believe that a fact, which, if true, would go to show that the regular succession of the true regimen of the priesthood was interrupted for several centuries, nay which indeed would prove that Christ suffered the economy of the ministry to be altered, and which at the same time involves all the inconsistencies and difficulties which the Right Rev. Gentleman has stated, could ever have had an existence. The belief of this usurpation must have originated at some period, in the prejudice or mistake of men, and cannot be founded in fact—I wish however to leave the gentlemen to support their position in their own way, begging them at the same time, not unnecessarily to detain the council.

Presbyter Primus. We submit the question.

Chairman. We proceed then to the third accusation viz. *that there is no express warrant for Episcopacy in the Scriptures—they no where say, "Thus saith the Lord."*

Presbyter Quartus. It appears to me gentlemen that the fact, that God has no where laid down the plan of church government in his revealed will, and has no where said that this or that particular regimen should be observed, is a

good and sufficient argument why we should lay no great stress on any form whatever, and especially why we should not claim to ourselves to be exclusively right. There is something to me very forbidding, in hearing men positively declare, that this is God's institution—God's regimen —when it must be granted that they have no express authority for saying so.

Presbyter Secundus. Gentlemen, I am sorry to hear the Rev. Gentleman speak thus loosely on this subject. He seems to intimate that no regimen of the Church is of divine institution. This, I hope, he is very far from believing. The Presbyterian form of church government is held forth in the New Testament as clear as the sun in the firmament of heaven, and the acts of the Apostles uniting with the commission given to them by Christ, amounts in my estimation, to an express warrant for the practice of our churches.

Doctor Bishop. Gentlemen, it appears to me there is some looseness in the observations of both the gentlemen. The charge preferred against that Church to which I belong is, " that there is no express warrant in the scriptures for her peculiar government." This we readily grant, affirming at the same time that this is no less true with

respect to Presbyterian regimen than Episcopal. What we contend for is, that although we have not an express warrant in so many words, still we have *Apostolic practice* and *institution*, and that *these* are conclusive evidence of divine right. If the broad principle be admitted, that express precept *only* and not *Apostolic practice*, is conclusive evidence of divine right, by what proof shall we establish the divine institution of the Sabbath, or indeed, the genuineness of the writings of the New Testament.

The Apostles acted under divine inspiration. Those institutions, therefore, which they settled, and which are not obviously of a local and temporary nature, are authorised by that divine spirit under which they acted, and are to be reverenced and obeyed as from God. The contrary principle cuts up by the roots evangelical doctrine, and shakes to its foundation, the Christian Church.

There is then only one thing to be considered in reference to the charge under consideration—And that is, whether all Apostolic practices are equally obligatory ? If not, is Episcopacy one which is binding in all ages ? That *all* are equally obligatory is not to be pretended—There is an evident distinction between them, therefore,

which is this—The practices of the Apostles which were intended to last, and be *unchangeable*, are binding on all Christians, while those which were intended to be temporary and mutable, are not.—And we can determine instantly, from the *nature* of those practices, whether they were to be local and transitory, or of general and permanent observance. The *love* feasts, the *kiss* of charity, the deaconesses, who were to attend on women in baptism, were Apostolic *practices* evidently of inferior moment, proper and necessary only under peculiar circumstances of the Church, and laid aside when these circumstances changed. But the *practice* of the Apostles in settling the *Christian ministry* is of the first importance, and of permanent obligation.

The Christian ministry lies at the foundation of the Christian Church. The Apostles were to institute a ministry which was to continue, by succession, "to the end of the world." We have the same right to change the sacraments, and to pretend that they are temporary and mutable, as we have the *constitution* of the Christian ministry, as settled by *Apostolic practice*. Here the *institutions* of the Apostles must be gathered from their *practice*, from their authoritative acts. The *ministry* is of

divine authority, and rests solely on a divine commission given by Christ to his Apostles. This commission must be derived from Christ; the source of all power in the Church, by a succession of persons authorised to transmit it. In no other way can it be derived. Once admit that this succession has been interrupted—admit that the mode of transmitting the ministerial commission may be changed—may be placed in other hands than those in which the Apostles placed it, and you render null the promise of Christ—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." You suffer the gates of hell to prevail against the Church, for you wrest from it its divine character. You make its ministers and its sacraments, human officers and human ordinances. You sever it from its divine head, from which it derives spiritual growth and nourishment.

The connection between the visible Church and the "Lord of all," can only be kept up by a visible ministry, administering visible sacraments; and this ministry, can derive its authority from Christ only, in that mode and order originally constituted. We contend not then, that Episcopacy is unchangeable, merely because it is the original form of government settled by Apos-

tolic practice : but we contend that it is unchangeable, because it is the originally constituted mode of conveying that *commission*, without which there can be no visible ministry, no visible sacraments, no visible Church. The power of ordination must remain with the first grade of the ministry, now called Bishops, because with them it was placed by the Apostles, divinely commissioned to found the Church, to constitute its ministry, and to provide for the continuance of this ministry "to the end of the world." Change the ministry—place the power of ordination in other hands, and the Church is no longer founded "on the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Its constitution and ministry have no power but what man gives them. It rests on the sandy foundation of *human authority*. When "the floods come, when the rain descends, when the winds blow and beat upon it, it will fall, for it is not founded on the ROCK OF AGES.

Hence, although we pretend not that Episcopacy is founded on *express warrant*, still we contend that it is supported by divine authority, equal to such a warrant. And we think that gentlemen should be extremely cautious how they bring

charges against the Church. They should be able to prove that Episcopacy is not the true regimen of the priesthood of Christ's Church, before they bring such accusations, as the one under consideration. Had the gentlemen first proved that Episcopacy was not that regimen, then their charge might have been predicated upon that proof. But by bringing their charges forward first, they necessarily have to beg the principal question, which I conceive can have no good effect, other than to perplex and prolong the controversy.

Chairman. We are now waiting such further remarks as gentlemen may be desirous of offering.

After the lapse of a short time, no one rising to speak, the chairman, having consulted with the Jurors, announced to the assembly, that it was the unanimous opinion of the court, that the charge under consideration would not lie, and that it was therefore dismissed.

Chairman. The fourth accusation gentlemen, *is "that Episcopacy should be discountenanced, because it denies the Scripture institution of Ruling Elders."*

Presbyter Tertius. Gentlemen, in discussing

the other charges which have been tried, I have not taken an active part, because I considered them of minor importance towards prostrating this enemy of the Christian cause, Episcopacy. The one now brought before us, I view as a primary means of exposing the imposture. I therefore proceed to the argument.

There is, gentlemen, independent of all historical testimony, a necessity, little short of absolute, that one or more persons, under some name, to perform the duties of ruling Elders, should be appointed in every well ordered congregation. The minister, whether he be called Pastor, Bishop, Rector, or by whatever title, cannot individually perform all the duties necessary to maintain government and discipline in the Church. He cannot be every where or know every thing. He must have a number of grave, judicious and pious persons who shall assist him with information and counsel, whose *official* duty it shall be to aid him in overseeing, regulating and edifying the Church. We can hardly have a better comment on these ideas, than the practice of those Churches who reject *Ruling Elders*—Our Episcopal brethren reject them; but they are obliged to have their *Vestrymen* and *Church Wardens*, who per-

form the duties belonging to such Elders. Our Independent brethren, also reject this class of Church officers; but they too, are forced to resort to a committee, who attend to the numberless details of parochial duty, which the minister cannot perform. They can scarcely take a single step without having, in fact, though not in name, precisely such officers as are comprised under the scriptural appellation of Ruling Elders. Now is it probable, is it credible, that the Apostles acting under the inspiration of Christ, should entirely overlook this necessity and make no provision for it? It is incredible. But we have better evidence than this. The New Testament makes express mention of such Elders. There is undoubtedly a reference to this in 1 Timothy, v. 17, "*Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in word and doctrine.*" Every man of plain good sense, who had never heard of any controversy on the subject, would conclude, on reading this passage, that, when it was written, there were two kinds of Elders; one whose duty it was to *labour in word and doctrine*, and *another*, who did not thus labour, but *ruled* in the Church—The Apostle says, *Elders*

that rule well are worthy of double honour, but especially those who labour in the word and doctrine.

For this construction of the passage, Dr. Whitaker, a zealous and learned Episcopal divine contends—"by these words," says he, "the Apostle evidently distinguishes between the Bishops, and the inspectors of the church. If all who rule well be worthy of double honor, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine, it is plain there were some who did not so labour; for if all had been of this discription, the meaning would have been absurd; but the word *specially*, points out a difference. If I should say all who study well at the university, are worthy of double honour; especially they who labor in the study of theology; I must either mean that all do not apply themselves to the study of theology, or I should speak nonsense. Wherefore, I confess that to be the most genuine sense, by which pastors and teachers are distinguished from those who only governed.

I shall in addition to these arguments, recite you but one authority, from among many of the ancients. It shall be from Hilary. It begins thus: "for indeed among all nations, old age is honorable. Thence it is that the synagogue, and

after that, the church had *Elders*, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which, by what negligence it grew into disuse, I know not, unless perhaps by the *sloth*, or rather by the *pride* of the teachers, while they alone wished to appear something."

Upon these authorities gentlemen—authorities drawn from sources which cannot be disputed, the scriptures and the best Episcopal writers, I risk the argument. If this charge be sustained, one grade of Episcopal regimen, of course, falls to the ground, and Episcopacy itself is lost.

Doct. Bishop. I have been waiting a moment in order to hear what further may be said by the gentlemen upon the charge, but as none of them rise, I proceed to examine the Rev. Gentleman's authorities, in which he so proudly triumphs. Before I proceed to consider the arguments themselves, however, I must observe, that were Episcopalians to admit such an order in the church as *Ruling Elders*, it could in no sense be the cause of Episcopacy "falling to the ground." As Bishops have not the sole power in ecclesiastical affairs—as Presbyters are their counsellors and assistants in the administration of church discipline—so *Ruling Elders*, supposing them to have an equal share in

the government with *preaching* Presbyters, would by no means invade the negative power of Bishops. Episcopacy then, is safe, whatever may be the decision of the question.

The Rev. Gentleman draws his first argument from the *necessity* of the case; and I must confess, if not *drawn*, it never would have appeared. He thinks he "can hardly have a better comment on this necessity," than the practice of those churches which reject Ruling Elders." Here he brings in his Episcopal brethren with their Vestry and Church-Wardens, and the Independents with their committee. Is the Gentleman ignorant, how wide a difference there is, between his Ruling Elders, and our Vestry and Wardens? Let us examine and compare them.

His "Church Session consists of the minister, or ministers and elders of a particular congregation." "The Church Session is competent to the spiritual government of the congregation." Sec. 1 and 2, chap. 3. Is this the business of our Vestries, and of Independent Committees? No such thing. They have nothing at all to do with spiritual matters. Their business relates *solely* to *temporalities*. They cannot admonish, "rebuke, suspend, or exclude from the sacraments, those who

are found to deserve the censures of the Church," as the Ruling Elders can, for whom the gentleman pleads. Their business is totally different; and therefore, if *necessity* requires Ruling Elders, it requires *spiritual* ones in the Presbyterian, and temporal ones among Episcopalians and Independents. The necessity of having Laymen, to take care of the temporalities of the church, is evident to every man. But until it can be proved, that Jesus Christ did not establish a *competent priesthood*, there can be no necessity of having *Laymen* to administer in spiritual things.

The next argument which the Rev. Gentleman produces is from the Holy Scriptures. "Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine." On these words the Gentleman remarks, that every man of plain good sense, who had never heard of a controversy on the subject, would conclude, on reading this passage, that when it was written, there were two kinds of Elders, (this happens to be the very point to be determined) one whose duty it was to labour in the word and doctrine, and another, who did not thus labour, but only ruled in the Church." I hope the Rev. Gentleman will confess that there is a

great deal of plain good sense in the Christian world, and yet by far the greater part of it is against him. I hope the Gentleman will allow that Ignatius, Ireneus, Tertullian, Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Chrysostom, Jerome, and many other eminent writers, have enumerated the orders of the Church repeatedly, and yet have not a sentence to support his favourite system of Ruling Elders—I hope he will also allow, that these men had plain good sense. I should also hope he will allow, that Baxter, Vines, and the greater part of the English Presbyterian Divines in their day, besides numbers of foreign Presbyterians, who have distinguished themselves by their writings, and yet were professed enemies to Ruling Elders, were men of plain good sense. Surely, Chamius, Salmasius, Blondell, Ludovicus, Capellus, Moyses, Amiraldus, all Presbyterians, were not novices—still they all testified against Ruling Elders. The Rev. Gentleman proceeds upon this text and rests the whole explanation of it, upon Dr. Whitaker, whom he calls a "zealous and learned Episcopal divine." But for what, I ask, was Dr. Whitaker zealous? Certainly not for Episcopacy. He was zealous for the peculiar doctrines of Presbyterians. *Learned* he was; but an

Episcopalian he never was, although a minister of the Church of England; for it is not every one who wears her garb, that adopts her principles. But it matters not what he was. We have nothing to do with him, but with his reasoning. Let us try it, and I presume we shall find it insufficient to answer the purpose for which the Rev. Gentleman quoted it.

The fact which the gentleman would *wish* to have proved, by the text quoted from Timothy is, that *those who ruled well*, and those who *laboured in the word and doctrine*, held *distinct* offices. Now this fact is contended for by Dr. Whitaker, and of course by the Rev. Gentleman who last addressed you. Those who ruled well, might for aught any man knows, have been ordained to *preach* also, and might, in consequence, have frequently preached; but they were not *laborious* in preaching. This is the distinction marked by the word *especially*; a distinction not of *office* but of *industry* in the *same office*. Some elders were more concerned in *ruling*: others in *preaching*: but it is miserable logic to infer from this, that those who ruled, had not also a right to preach: as miserable logic as it would be to infer, that those who preached, had not a right to rule. The word es-

pecially will not warrant either conclusion. It undoubtedly implies a difference, not in the powers conferred, but solely in their application. When Doct. Whitaker infers from this word, a distinction of office, he merely begs the question. He ought to have proved that the word *specially*, necessarily implies a distinction of office. This he does not prove. His conclusion then is unwarranted—and the text by no means supports the notion of *Ruling Elders.*

I shall next proceed to examine the Rev. Gentleman's quotation from Hilary, an early writer. Had Hilary said that the seniors, in his day, were Ruling Elders—that they formed a component part of the Presbytery ; that they with the Pastors, had the power of examining and licensing candidates for the gospel ministry, of ordaining, settling, removing or judging ministers : of resolving questions of doctrine or discipline, of condemning erroneous opinions"—in short, of ordering whatever pertained to the spiritual concerns of the Churches under their charge,* he would to be sure make out for us a sampie of Ruling Elders in his day, answerable to those contended for in the present. But he has not a syllable in support of one of these

* Presbyterian form of gov.

particulars. He says no more than that seniors, or elderly men, were consulted, but that the custom was grown into disuse in his time. And can we from such declaration, draw the conclusion, that there were Ruling Elders at that time; such as are now contended for? To do so would be strange logic. Elderly men were *consulted:* therefore, there were Ruling Elders in the Church, who shared her spiritual government.

Gentlemen, it is incontestibly true, that in the different situations of the Church, which frequently occurred, in the first three centuries, while persecution lasted, it was customary to consult aged men, not as *officers* however, but as *laymen.* Surely from this custom we can upon no principle, infer a warrant for the establishment of a grade of Church officers.

Presbyter Independent. The office of Ruling Elders, gentlemen, is so unreasonable a thing—is supported by such superficial inferences, from texts of Scripture, and such vague expressions of ancient writers, that it is really unaccountable how any set of men can continue so tenacious upon the subject. I could wish that the sense of the whole Christian world could be consulted, for almost all Christendom is against it. The Ro-

man, Greek, and Coptic Churches are against it. The Churches of England, Sweden and Denmark, are against it. Our numerous sects of Independents in this country and in Great Britain are against it. Nay, even Presbyterians themselves, are divided upon this subject. Bishop Sage informs us, that, " the whole tribe of the Belgic *remonstrants*, are against it in their Confession of Faith.

Baxter in his preface to his Five Disputations of Church Government, says expressly that, " as far as he could understand, the greatest part, if not three for one, of the English Presbyterian Ministers, were as far against Lay Elders as any Prelates of them all."

It is in vain for Gentlemen to set up their reasoning, against the understandings and the good sense of almost all the Christian world upon this subject The fact is, that amongst the hundreds of ancient writers extant, there is not an individual of them all, who in enumerating the grades in the ministry and the officers in the Church, says any thing of Ruling Elders. The most that can be said from the Scriptures, are the illogical inferences of Dr. Whitaker ; and all that can be drained from the ancients, is, that old men were consulted

in cases of distress and emergency. And may God grant us prudence, to appeal to the same source for knowledge, and cool deliberation, in every tribulation in the Church, and in the day of persecution and affliction.

Chairman. Gentlemen we are prepared to hear whatever may be further urged upon this question.

Presbyter Tertius. We submit the question.

Chairman. We proceed to the fifth charge viz: *That Episcopacy grew out of, and is an error of Popery.*

Presbyter Tertius. Gentlemen, I have taken the trouble of investigating this charge laboriously and conscientiously, and after the most mature deliberation, find it well founded. Popery, strictly speaking, is the ecclesiastical supremacy assumed by the Bishop of Rome, and involves in it that *system of corruption*, as well in doctrine and government, as in practice, which characterizes that Church. Hence *Transubstantiation*, Purgatory, Auricular Confession, the Worship of Images, the Invocation of Saints, Adoration of the

Cross, and Prelacy, are all spoken of as Romish errors. And if the Roman Pontiff be not their immediate *author* he is their immediate *supporter*. In this sense Clerical imparity is a Popish error, nearly coeval in its rise, with the commencement of Papacy itself. It originated from the same source, and tends to the same mischief. All my enquiries have more and more confirmed me in the persuasion, that it is a real mischievous departure from Apostolic simplicity. That this charge is not unfounded, may be further argued, not only from the Popish and Episcopal Churches supporting the same views upon the subject, but their adhering to each other with great tenacity, almost acknowledging that they must stand or fall together. It is needless to cite authorities upon this point; for it is well known that all Roman Catholics claim the Protestant Episcopal Church as a daughter who rebelled against her mother, and having stole away from her, abused *her* who begot her. Indeed Episcopalians hesitate not to acknowledge, that the Church of Rome is valid in her ministry, and Apostolic in her priesthood. The Protestant Episcopal Church to be sure is a Reformed Church—reformed from many of the most awful errors of Popery: but

still, when she came out she not only brought with her, her "Mass Books"* new moddled, but also one of the proudest marks of Papal domination, Prelacy. This is a fact which on no ground can be disputed. Her history can be regularly traced back to her own mother, and the comparison between the two can be easily drawn, and when drawn, the similarity is evident.

Doct. Bishop. Gentlemen I have already mentioned in the course of the proceedings of this council, that it was with pain I heard gentlemen attempting to renew old prejudices and abuse, which have since the Puritanic age, been, at times, heaped upon the Protestant Episcopal Church. It is certainly surprizing that gentlemen of candour will do this. Surely it is not their design to draw an ideal similarity between the Churches, making an unfavourable impression, and hoping thereby to induce a belief that one partakes of the impurity of the other. This is a design which I am unwilling to ascribe to them. It must therefore be an honest error, which is run into in consequence of both Churches being Episcopal. Let us then try the question, by first ascertaining, from authentic

* Christian Magazine.

history, when Popery took its rise, and then whether Episcopacy did, or did not exist before that period. If *before*, it certainly is not a Papal error, and our Protestant Episcopalians are not the more Papists, because they enjoy an Episcopal form of government.

We can fix within a certain period the commencement of the reign of "Anti-Christ." The Pope of Rome did not arrive to "full stature," according to the generality of Protestant writers, until the 7th century. And an accurate historian says, "the *earliest period*, which can be *suggested*, [for the rise of Popery] is the year 325."* Let us then fix the period as far back as can be suggested; let us fix it in the year 325. Now gentlemen, we are able to prove, by the most abundant and unequivocal testimony, from primitive writers, that the Episcopal form of government did exist prior to that period. Bishop Pearson, in his vindication of the epistles of Ignatius, quotes several authors who particularly mention, that the Bishop of Alexandria was always ordained, not by Presbyters but by a Bishop. Simeon Metaphrastes says of St. Mark, that he ordained as his successor, Anianus,

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* *Dr. Livingston in his Missionary Sermon.*

Bishop of Alexandria, and gave to other Churches Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons.* Jerome positively asserts, that imparity existed in the Church of Alexandria from its foundation. St. Cyprian, one of the most celebrated men of his age, who lived about the year 250, and was actually Bishop of Carthage, furnishes us in his writings with abundant evidence that Episcopacy was universal in his day.

Again—Polycarp was unquestionably Bishop of Smyrna, and according to the most authentic records, was ordained by St. Paul. Tertullian, who lived in the third century, in his writings, gives us a full account of the Bishops of his day.

About seventy years from the Apostolic age flourished Ireneus, who was Bishop of Lyons.—"We," says he, "can reckon up those, whom the Apostles ordained Bishops in the several Churches, and who they were that succeeded them down to our times."

I might Gentlemen, increase the catalogue of Bishops, who lived prior to the time at which the first rise of Popery has been fixed—I might show you from their own writings, that they possessed

*Vin. Ep. Ignatius,

the peculiar power of Bishops above Presbyters. But this is certainly unnecessary. These, Gentlemen, are not matters of *opinion*—they are *facts*, and cannot be mistaken. They are facts which we find again and again recorded by authentic historians, with names and places and dates accurately put down.

Thus the earliest period even *suggested* for the rise of Popery being the year 325, and there having been at that time and for a succession of years before, Bishops in the Churches, and Episcopal government in the peculiar sense, having before that time existed——Episcopacy can no more be said to be a *Popish error*, than the Bible can be said to be a Popish book. The Papal Church *use* both ; but *originated* neither ; and unless *that use* can change a divine institution, into an invention of man, then we derive not our Church government from the Church of Rome.

The fact is gentlemen, that the Church was from the Apostolic age Episcopal. At a certain period, the Church of Rome became corrupt, and was inveloped in a cloud of error. At the glorious Reformation the Protestants, with great prudence as well as zeal, reformed themselves, and came out from these errors. But not one of these

Reformers at this time contended that Episcopal regimen was an error of that Church from which they departed. They threfore did not renounce it. The Episcopal Church thus having thrown off the errors of Rome, claims, and she can support her claim, to be a true Apostolic Church, cleared from those errors which afflicted her, when in communion with the Romans. If Episcopacy were an usurpation—if the power of the Bishop, like that of the Pope, were antichristian and unscriptural, would not the illustrious Reformers have denounced Episcopacy with as much zeal as they did Popery? To suppose that they would not is at once to impeach their understandings and their sincerity.

Upon the whole, gentlemen, to me it is as clear as the sun in the firmament, that the accusation is unfounded and cannot be supported with even the semblance of argument.

Chairman. With the advice of the Jurors I proceed to the examination of the next and last charge, viz. "*That Dioceasan Episcopacy is not to be supported by Scripture or history, but puts it in the power of man to lord it over the heritage of God.*"

Presbyter Secundus. In the consideration of

this charge we enter upon the principal question under consideration, and in supporting it, I trust, we shall be able to show what the precise nature of the constitution of the Christian Church is.—If it be proved that Dioceasan Episcopacy is not supported by the word of God, or by the voice of Antiquity, the truth of the latter clause of this accusation will readily appear, viz. that "it puts it in the power of man to lord it over the heritage of God."

I shall now proceed gentlemen to offer you direct and positive proof in support of this charge. In doing this, I shall confine myself to the word of God; for whatever is not found in the Bible, cannot be considered in any sense, as *essential*, either to the doctrine or the order of the Church. As the Christian ministry is an office, deriving its existence and its authority solely from Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church, it is obvious that his word is the first and principal rule, by which any claims to this office can properly be tried, and the duties and powers of those who bear it, ascertained. The *practice* of the Church is justly admitted as a *help* to the right *understanding* of scripture authority, and as confirming our faith in those doctrines which Christ

and his Apostles teach. Let us then examine what the Scriptures say on the subject before us. We affirm, that although they present us with no formal or explicit decisions on the subject, still we find in them a mode of expression, and a number of *facts*, from which we may accurately ascertain the out-lines of the Apostolic plan of Church order. By an attention to these, if I mistake not, it will be easy to shew that the Presbyterian form of Church government, is the true regimen of the Gospel.

The first authority which I shall offer, is taken from our Lord's commission to his Apostles, which is in these words—"*go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*"—"*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" These passages form the grand commission under which all lawful ministers have acted, from the moment in which it was delivered to the present time. You will observe gentlemen, that this commission was given to *one* order of ministers only, viz. the eleven Apostles. To them he committed the ministerial authority in his kingdom. This commission therefore con-

stitutes no more than one order of Gospel ministers. It embraces the highest and lowest ecclesiastical power, in one office and in one person, and it is impossible to divide it into three, as our Episcopal Brethren would have it. Until then the friends of three orders in the Christian ministry, produce from Scripture, some other commission than this; or find some explicit warrant for a *threefold division* of the power which this one commission conveys, we are compelled to conclude, that our Lord contemplated but one standing order of Gospel ministers in his Church.

The second authority which I shall give is found in Acts xx. 17. 28. "*And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called the Elders of the Church. And when they were come unto him, he said unto them, take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood.*" These overseers were indisputably Scripture Bishops. And from this sentence it is observable that there were a number of these overseers or Bishops, who governed the Church in the city of Ephesus, as co-ordinate rulers, or in common council. This is wholly irreconcilable with the principles of modern Epis-

copacy ; but perfectly coincides with the Presbyterian doctrine that Scriptural Bishops are the pastors of single congregations.

The next passage to our purpose is the address of the Apostle Paul to the Philippians. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the Bishops and Deacons." Here, as in the authority above cited, we find the inspired writer speaking of a *number* of Bishops in a single city—a fact totally inconsistent with Prelacy.

The third passage to be adduced is Titus 1, and is as follows—"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders [Presbyters] in every city, as I had appointed thee."

This passage proves, beyond controversy, that, in Apostolic times, it was customary to have a plurality of these Bishops in a single city. We have before seen that there were a number of Bishops, in the city of Ephesus, and a number more in the city of Philippi ; but in the passage before us we find Titus directed to ordain a plurality of them in *every* city. This perfectly agrees with the Presbyterian doctrine, that scriptural *Bishops* were the Pastors of single congregations,

or Presbyters, invested, either separately or jointly, as the case might be, with pastoral charges; but it is impossible to reconcile it with the modern notions of Dioceasan Episcopacy.

There is another passage equally conclusive in support of this argument. It is that which is found in 1 Peter, v. 1. 2. "The Elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an Elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof*, (that is, exercising the office, or performing the duties of *Bishops* over them) *not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.*"

The construction of this passage is obvious. It expressly represents Presbyters as Bishops of the flock, and solemnly exhorts them to exercise the power, and perform the duties of this office.

Thus full and conclusive gentlemen, is the evidence, drawn from divine authority, that *Gospel Bishops* were *Pastors* of single congregations; that Presbyters and Bishops possessed the same commissions, were endowed with the same qualifications, and were assigned to the same sphere of duty. The Presbyters in Apostolic times, were empow-

ered *to preach the word*; they possessed the power of government, or of *ruling* the Church, and of *ordaining*. The latter of these our Episcopal Brethren expressly deny. I shall therefore adduce certain facts recorded in the Bible, which indisputably prove that *Presbyters did ordain* in the Apostolic times, and shall with these close my argument.

The first instance that I shall mention, is that of Timothy, which is spoken of by the Apostle St. Paul, in the following terms. 1 Tim. iv. 14. "*Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.*" All agree that the Apostle is here speaking of Timothy's ordination; and this ordination is expressly said to have been performed with the *laying on of the hands of the Presbytery*—that is, of the Elders or a council of Presbyters. Than this more conclusive evidence cannot be asked to prove the position, that Presbyters *did ordain* in the Apostolic age.

Take another instance of the like nature. It is that of Paul and Barnabas, who, after having been regularly set apart to the work of the ministry themselves, proceeded *thro' the cities of Lystra, Iconium, &c. And when they had ordained them*

Elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed. Barnabas was a mere Presbyter—was in no sense an Apostle, and had no pre-eminence which belonged to the Apostolic character; still we here find him ordaining Elders in every Church.

Unless, gentlemen, I deceive myself, I have now established my position, that there is no officer, superior to Presbyters, spoken of in the Scriptures, and that the Christian Church was organized by the Apostles, under the Presbyterian form. This position, thus established, decides the question. Such a concurrence of Scripture facts, as has been adduced, is at once remarkable and conclusive as to the simple fact, that the Presbyterian regimen was adopted in the Apostolic age. I cannot see how any one can peruse the New-Testament, with an impartial mind, without perceiving that the Presbyterian form of Church government is there distinctly portrayed.

With these observations, gentlemen, I submit the subject.

Doct Bishop. Gentlemen, I hope we shall not be so unfortunate as to exhaust the patience of this assembly, before we consummate the business

before us. You have doubtless observed, that I have made it my business, not so much to establish the claims of Episcopalians, as to vindicate the Church against the charges brought against her, by rebutting the arguments of her assailants. It must be evident to every one that I entered this controversy, not of choice but of necessity. It imposes upon me an unexpected task, but a task which every sense of duty impels me to perform. It is my present design to examine the arguments which the Rev. Gentleman has offered you in support of Presbyterian parity. This is the only thing I shall attempt at present. But before the final decision is made upon this subject I shall beg your indulgence, while I state the authorities which in my estimation, support the claims of Episcopacy, and which I trust will finally clear the Protestant Episcopal Church from the serious charges which the gentlemen are endeavouring to support against her.

I have no possible objection to the mode which the gentleman who has spoken in support of this charge, has chosen for settling the matter in controversy. Institutions of God, should be defended by the word of God. The Bible is the first and best rule, by which to settle this important point.

I am highly pleased to hear him appeal to the tribunal of Jesus Christ and his Apostles; and I am equally pleased to observe, the gentleman's accurate acquaintance with his subject, and his great ingenuity in bringing forward, in the most advantageous manner, all the arguments to be deduced from the Bible. The thorough knowledge he has evinced of the institutions of Christ and the acts of his Apostles—the skill he displayed in the arrangement of his arguments, and the ability with which he enforced them, furnish striking marks of a superior mind. I can only regret that such talents are not employed in a better cause.

His first argument is drawn from the commission of our Saviour to his eleven Apostles. On this commission the gentleman observes, that there is but *one* order of ministers recognized—that to that order was committed the whole ministerial authority in Christ's Kingdom—that it possessed the highest and lowest ecclesiastical power—and that until the friends of three orders in the Christian ministry, produce from Scripture some *other* commission, or find some explicit warrant for a *threefold division* of the powers which this commission conveys, the cause of Episcopacy is desperate. I know not that any Episcopalian ob-

jects to the first part of this explanation—viz. that all ministerial power is derived from the commission of Christ, and that the power which the Apostles received, embraced every possible grade in the ministry; but the consequence which the gentleman draws from this, no Episcopalian feels himself under any obligation to subscribe to. It appears to me that the learned gentleman, in this case, has used a little sophistry.

The particular Apostolic regimen of the Christian priesthood, was not yet precisely settled in the Church when our Saviour ascended; and the reason is evident. It was because HE was, while on earth, the visible, as well as spiritual head of his Church, and surrendered not its government to the Apostles, until he departed. In this state of his kingdom, being about to ascend, Christ clothed his Apostles with plenary power to act as his visible head—to perfect the organization of his Church—to establish what is now properly called the *Apostolic* regimen, to introduce such a regimen in the ministry as, no doubt, their divine head had already marked out to them. This they were to do, and this they did do, under divine influence, and Almighty controul.

But says the gentleman, the whole power of the

ministerial character was vested in the Apostles, in *one* order. Hence he infers that these Apostles could not, and did not establish a diversity of grades in the Apostolic ministry. Strange logic indeed.

The power of establishing Church order is vested in the Apostles equally ; therefore those Apostles would establish no order in the Church but Presbyterian parity.

Gentlemen, the Episcopalians contend, that the Apostles possessed the only ministerial power—that they alone transmitted it to their successors, and that the peculiar regimen of the Christian priesthood, is to be learned from their history.

I contend in the first place, that there has always existed an imparity in the priesthood, under every dispensation—that this was the case amongst the Jews—that it was also the case in the days of our Saviour—that he *then* was the visible Head and Bishop of the Church—that under him were two orders, his Apostles, and seventy disciples—and that Christ, when about to ascend, did constistute his Apostles the *first* order—and did empower them to transmit their Apostolic authority to successors, and to constitute two other orders, answering to the economy of the Church, as well

under the Jewish dispensation, as while he himself was the visible Head and Bishop—And finally, they contend that the history of the Apostles indisputably proves, that they did appoint successors to themselves, with full power to ordain others—and that they did also establish two other orders, viz. Presbyters and Deacons, answering to the two lower orders in the Jewish Priesthood, and also to the grades of power, which the Apostles and the seventy held previous to that special commission, which the Apostles received from Christ, constituting them, on his ascension, the highest order in the ministry.

This is the position gentlemen, which I as an Episcopalian take, and which does not subject me to prove any *new* commission, or a threefold division of that which Christ gave his Apostles. I have only to prove that the Apostles did institute *two other* orders, and that they actually did, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, establish an imparity in the ministry. This fact we profess to be able to establish, and before the final decision of this question, I shall beg your indulgence while I state the proof on which we rely to support it. So that I cannot percieve that the Episcopal cause is in the least embarrassed by the

comments which the Rev. Gentleman has made on the commission of our blessed Saviour to his Apostles.

I now pass on to the other quotations which the gentleman has introduced as proof of ministerial parity. Of these he has produced four. The object which he proposes to gain in citing these passages is, to prove from the community of names, that there being at Ephesus, &c. a number of Presbyters sometimes called Bishops, that hence there was no imparity in the ministry in the Apostolic age. It must rather be ascribed to the ingenuity of man than to the substantial nature of the cause he advocates, that he depends upon a plausible use of the community of names for support. It is confessed on all hands, that Bishop, Elder and Presbyter, are titles, sometimes applied to the same officer. But this application of names proves nothing in reference to the *powers* of the office. It was the peculiar *powers* with which the Apostles and their successors were clothed, which formed their distinctive character; and so of the two other grades of officers in the Christian Priesthood. The first text which the Gentleman quotes is from Acts xx. 17, 28. *And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the*

Church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flocks over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers.

On this passage the gentleman remarks, "it is hence observable, that in the city of Ephesus there were a *number* of Bishops who governed the Church in that city, as co-ordinate rulers, or in common council." Grant that they *were* Bishops —that they were *Congregational* Bishops—In other words, that they had the pastoral charge of congregations. Before the gentleman gains his point, he must prove that there was no Bishop over these Bishops at Ephesus. This would be a task more difficult than he will be disposed to attempt. The fact is, there is not a text more unfortunate for his purpose in the Bible. Who sent and called these Elders from Ephesus? It was the Apostle St. Paul, the founder, the head of this Church—their Bishop in the peculiar sense of the word. Else why has he the power to call these Elders, or Bishops, if you please, from their own city, and why do they implicitly obey his call and meet him at Miletus?

The fact is gentlemen as recorded in the Acts, that Paul had already ordained Timothy to gov-

ern the Church at Ephesus. Paul took Timothy with him on his way to Jerusalem, and stopping at Miletus, he (Paul) sent for the Presbyters at Ephesus as a ready way, no doubt of introducing Timothy into his charge as Bishop of that city; from which time we find Timothy presiding over the Church at Ephesus—governing it—and charged by the Apostle St. Paul, to use the power of ordination, which *he* had conferred upon him, with caution and prudence. Here then gentlemen, we find a number of Bishops at Ephesus, but we find they have a Bishop at their head, as the *sole* governor and ordainer, among them—a Bishop, the immediate successor of the Apostle St. Paul, and by him clothed with Apostolical authority. The case of Ephesus is an incontestible fact, proving Diocesan Episcopacy. God knows, I should have no objection to a parity in the ministry, if it could be proved from the Scripture. So far from setting up my will, or my prejudice, or party upon this subject, I would willingly kneel at the feet of the Rev. Gentleman, and be taught the principles of Presbyterian order, provided such principles could be drawn from the Bible. But when gentlemen of celebrity of character, gentlemen of talents, of learning and piety, with all their labours,

can produce proof of parity no more solid than this, I must beg to dissent from them. I wish to do it with the utmost decorum and modesty, but I must beg leave to dissent.

The second quotation of the Rev. Gentleman is as follows—" Paul and Timotheus, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Phillippi, with the Bishops and Deacons." As the reasoning of the gentleman upon this passage is founded altogether upon the term Bishops, I shall leave it to every one, to make his own comments, and proceed to his third quotation, which is as follows—Titus i. *For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every city, as I appointed thee.* The object of the gentleman, in this quotation is to prove that there was a plurality of Bishops, in every city in the Apostolic day, and from thence to infer, that *Congregational* and not *Dioceasan* Episcopacy was the regimen of the Church. Here again the gentleman seizes the word *Bishop*, and from it infers a parity in the ministry. Had he but for a moment contemplated the character of Titus, to whom this charge was given: who by the Apostle was placed over the Church at Crete, and who alone

is mentioned, as possessing the power of ordination in a district, which must have contained *many* Presbyters, who *alone* was to *set in order the things that were wanting*, he would certainly have chosen any other passage of Scripture, rather than this to support his position; he would have seen that this text is a direct and explicit proof of Dioceasan Episcopacy.

The other passage being of the same character with those I have already examined, I shall not trespass on your patience by adverting to it.

The gentleman closes his observations by a reference to two passages, as proof of his affirmation, that Presbyters *ordained* in the Apostolic age. The one of these being that of Timothy, which I have already examined at some length, I shall not now trespass on your time by a recapitulation of what I then said; and his other authorities for Presbyterian ordination, being those performed by Paul and Barnabus, who were both *Apostles*, *heads*, and *governors* of the Church, neither shall I detain you with any remarks on them. I rose gentlemen, for the single object of examaining the arguments of the Rev. Gentleman, designed to support Presbyterian regimen; and having, as I conceive, exposed their impotency, I now sit down, to hear what

further may be offered on this interesting subject.

Presbyter Tertius. Gentlemen, I have been indeed highly gratified with the gentleman's speech. It displays his usual genius, and his stubborn perseverance in the cause he advocates; but while it convinces me of his superior talents, it at the same time the more confirms me in the belief, that it requires more than the power of man to prove the divine right of Dioceasan Episcopacy. A cause which requires so much labour to support it, must be a bad one. The learned Rev. Gentleman, having earnestly endeavoured to answer some of the arguments opposed to him, is content to pass over others, in hope that silence would be received as refutation. The fact is gentlemen, that the scripture authorities which have been produced, are too conclusive to admit of an answer. My Brother Presbyter has brought together, with much perspicuity and precision, most of the Bible evidence, which proves a parity in the Christian Priesthood. His argument not only carries complete conviction, but is also of such a nature as not to be destroyed or even weakened, except by some express words or precept from the Scriptures themselves. Any

such evidence, I am confident, the friends of Prelacy will never be able to produce.

The charge under consideration being thus already supported by the highest authority, I shall detain you but for a few moments, while I cite to you a few authorities from those writers, who are stiled "Early Fathers." In doing this, I shall confine myself exclusively to writers of the first two centuries. Immediately after this period, so many corruptions began to creep into the Church, so many of the Christian writers are known to have been heterodox in their opinions, and indeed Papacy with all its darkness and error began to rise so high, that the testimony of every subsequent writer is to be received with suspicion. And during this period, so little is to be found in any writings extant, upon the peculiar regimen of the Priesthood, that I should think it needless to cite the few authorities to be deduced from an examination of these antient records, did not Episcopalians pride themselves on this source of proof; did they not seem to risk their cause upon it; and did they not proudly declare, that the united voice of antiquity was in their favour. I am pursuaded by an examination of the fact, that the voice of Antiquity is, on this point, at best weak,

and instead of proclaiming the validity of Episcopal doctrines, it speaks a language directly opposite, and declares that in that day, there were neither Popes nor Dioceasan Bishops. For the correctness of this assertion, let us appeal to the authorities themselves.

And first let us hear Clemens Romanus. He lived towards the close of the first century; and doubtless conversed with several of the Apostles. In consequence of a division in the Corinthian Church, he thus addresses them.—"It is a shame my beloved, yea, a very great shame, and unworthy of your Christian profession, to hear, that the most firm and ancient Church of the Corinthians, should, by one or two persons, be led into a sedition against its *Presbyters*. Only let the flock of Christ be at peace with the Presbyters that are set over it. He that shall do this, shall get to himself a very great honour in the Lord. Do ye, therefore, who first laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves to your Presbyters, and be instructed into repentance, bending the knee of your hearts."

Clemens, in this passage, evidently represents the Church at Corinth as subject not to an *individual*, but to a company of persons, whom he calls

Presbyters or Elders; and expostulates with them, because they had opposed and ill treated their Presbyters, and cast them out of their charge. This venerable Father, gives not the least hint of any distinction, between the officers in the Church, either in this passage or in any other he has left. Had such a distinction existed, it is not only strange, but unaccountable, that he did not mention it in this case, where the interference of the supreme officer in the Church was so necessary. The fact is Gentlemen, no such distinction existed.

The writer standing next on the roll of antiquity is Polycarp. In his epistle to the Church at Philippi, this venerable martyr, like Clemens, speaks only of two orders of Church officers; viz. Presbyters and Deacons. He exhorts the Philippians to obey these officers in the Lord. "It behooves you," says he, "to abstain from these things, being subject to the Presbyters and Deacons," as to God and Christ. This writer no where mentions the word Bishop in his whole epistle, nor does he give the most distant hint to intimate that there were any individual or body of men vested with powers superior to Presbyters.

Ignatius takes the next place in the list of

Apostolic writers. This Father, who is frequently quoted by Episcopalians with triumph, to be sure speaks of Bishops; but there is not a single passage in his writings, which favours the idea of *Diocesan* Bishops, or that *his* Bishops were of a distinct and superior order. There is not a word mentioned of these Bishops possessing the power of *ordaining* or *confirming*—nothing which may lead us to suppose they were not Pastors; and indeed *nothing* which can afford the least triumph to the friends of Prelacy.

We next appeal to the testimony of Ireneus. This Father, who is said to have suffered martyrdom about the year 202 after Christ, is an important and decisive witness, on the subject before us. The following passages are found in his writings. In his *book against Heresies*, he says, "when we challenge them (the Heretics) to that Apostolical tradition, which is preserved in the Churches, *through the successions of the Presbyters*, they oppose the tradition, pretending that they are wiser, not only than the Presbyters, but also than the Apostles."

Again—In his epistle to Florinus, in speaking of Polycarp, he says, "I am able to testify before God, that if that holy and Apostolical

Presbyter had heard any such thing, he would at once have exclaimed, as his manner was, "Good God! into what times hast thou reserved me!" Several other like extracts might be made from Ireneus. And I take it for granted, that no impartial reader can cast his eyes upon them, without perceiving how strongly and unequivocally they support the Presbyterian doctrine, of a parity in the ministry. This Father not only applies the names Bishop and Presbyter to the same persons, but he does it in a way which precludes all doubt, that he considers them as only different titles for the same office. He expressly declares, that Presbyters received the succession of the *Episcopate.*

The testimony of Clemens Alexandrinus, who flourished at the close of the second century, is likewise in favor of our doctrine concerning the Christian ministry. The following extracts from his writings, will enable you to judge, in what light he ought to be considered as a witness on this subject. "In the Church," he says, "the Presbyters are intrusted with the dignified ministry; the *deacons* with the subordinate."

Again—"This man is in reality a Presbyter, and a true *Deacon* of the purpose of God—not or-

dained of men, nor because a Presbyter, therefore esteemed a righteous man; but because a righteous man, therefore now reckoned in the Presbytery; and though here upon earth, he hath not been honoured with the chief seat, yet he shall sit down among the four and twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Revelations." Clement was a Presbyter of the Church of Alexandria. He speaks of himself as one of its governors, and claims the title of "Shepherd or Pastor," after the image of the good Shepherd—a title which the greater part of Episcopal writers acknowledge to have been given, in the premitive Church, to the highest order of ministers. He represents the Presbyters as intrusted with the *dignified ministry*, and the Deacons with the *subordinate*, without suggesting any thing to indicate a more *dignified order*.

I have now Gentlemen, gone through the testimony of those Fathers, who lived and wrote within the first two centuries after Christ, the limits which I prescribed to myself at the beginning of my address. I have not, to be sure, quoted every passage from those writers which speaks of the ministry and the then officers of the Church, but have endeavored to give an example or two from

each, as favourable to the Episcopal cause as any other. And I now appeal to your candour, gentlemen, whether there is a single passage, which proves that Christian *Bishops*, within the first two centuries, were, in fact, an order of clergy distinct from and superior to, those Presbyters, who were authorized to preach and administer sacraments.

Such then Gentlemen, is the result of the appeal to the early Fathers. They are so far from giving even a semblance of support to the Episcopal claim, that like the Scriptures, they every where speak a language wholy inconsistent with it, and favourable only to the doctrine of ministerial parity. What shall we say then, of those who triumphantly make contrary assertions? I only say, that those who find themselves able to justify such assertions, must have been much more successful in discovering early authorities in aid of their cause, than the most diligent, learned and keen sighted of their predecessors.

Upon the whole Gentlemen, I see not why this important charge is not sufficiently supported, and why a decision may not now be had.

Chairman. Gentlemen, the consideration of these charges, having already occupied so much

time, and the one under our present examination, being of supreme importance, it is proper that the council should now adjourn until to-morrow morning.

On motion therefore, the assembly adjourned till to-morrow 10 o'clock.

FIFTH DAY.

MET ACCORDING TO ADJOURNMENT.

Chairman. We have now met Gentlemen, for the purpose of consummating the business before us, and making a final decision upon the question, *whether Diocesan Episcopacy be the true Apostolical regimen of Christ's Church ?* Those gentlemen who wish to continue the discussion will now proceed.

Presbyter Quartus. Gentlemen, I rise not for the purpose of multiplying arguments upon this subject, but barely to express to this assembly, my full conviction of the propriety and truth of the charge now before this council. I have admired the temperate, and at the same time independent manner, in which my Brother Presbyters have conducted their arguments; and I cannot forbear to express the satisfaction which I have received,

from the fair light in which the gentlemen have placed the subject. This was a matter with which I confess myself but little acquainted, until now, and on which I must acknowledge, I had been driven into some doubts, by the high claims and lofty denunciations of some Episcopalians. But the gentlemen have so simplified the subject, and brought it within such a compass as to enable every mind to comprehend it. I presume therefore, that this council are prepared to decide as to the propriety of the charge, and to pronounce with one consent that Episcopacy is not only an innovation of man, but that "it puts it in man's power to lord it over the heritage of God."

Doctor Bishop. Gentlemen, I must beg the honour of your indulgence, while I offer some remarks upon the high charge now urged, with such stubborn perseverance, against Episcopalians. In doing this, I shall occupy as little time, as the nature of the subject, and my accountability to Him, who reigns in the Church triumphant, will admit of. I shall not feel myself under any obligations to take a formal view of the arguments offered by the two last gentlemen, inasmuch as

all their remarks are founded on *names*,* and not on the peculiar character of the Priesthood; and as I shall have occasion, in the course of my observations to refer to the same venerable Fathers. In this, it shall be my object to let them speak for themselves, and you. gentlemen, shall judge whether their voice be strong or "weak," and for whose cause they plead.

I now, gentlemen, pledge myself to prove by Scripture, and by Fathers who were cotemporaries with those to whom the Rev. Gentleman has referred, the *Apostolic institution of Episcopacy*;—In other words, that the Apostolic ministry consisted of three grades, Bishops, Priests and Dea-

* The true state of the case in reference to *names*, is unquestionably this—During the life of the Apostles, *deference* to them forbid that their successors in office should be called *Apostles*, and hence they were called by the common title of Bishop, Elder, &c. After the death of the Apostles, their successors to their *real office*, as Timothy, Titus, &c. were called Apostles; and in process of time, this title was changed, and those who held the *Apostolic commission*, assumed the title of Bishops, and the two lower orders retained the titles of Presbyter and Deacon. Thus saith an ancient Father, Theodoret—"The same persons," says he, "were anciently called Presbyters and Bishops, and they whom we now call Bishops, were then called Apostles; but in process of time, the name of Apostles was appropriated to them who were Apostles in the strict sense; and their successors dropped the name of Apostle, and took that of Bishop—In this sense Epaphroditus is called the Apostle of the Philippians—Titus was the Apostle of the Cretans, and Timothy of Asia." *Reporter.*

sons—the first possessing the *sole* power of *ordination.*

As a strong presumptive argument that this was the case, Episcopalians bring into view the regimen of the Jewish Priesthood. The Jewish Church was the visible Church of God, was acknowledged as such by our blessed Saviour himself—Her Priesthood was appointed by Heaven. In it, through their whole history, we find three orders, High Priest, Priest, and Levite, each possessing different powers, the two latter subordinate to the former. This order of the priesthood, among the Jews, was protected by the arm of God, and when invaded, the invaders were punished.

This being the undisputed fact under one dispensation of the Church of God, Episcopalians think that until there is found an *express warrant for a change*, (and they think they have a right to demand of non-Episcopalians that warrant) the known regimen of the ministry in Christ's Church in this one age, is an argument by which to determine her true order in this subsequent age, and subsequent dispensation.

The next presumptive argument they derive from the visible order of the priesthood, during

the ministry of our Saviour. After his baptism Christ acted as the *visible*, as well as spiritual High Priest of his Church on earth—All visible authority was derived from him—He was not only the head of Christians as their *Redeemer* and *Saviour*, but as their *visible Bishop*. Under himself, he constituted his twelve Apostles and seventy disciples, the Apostles holding a grade between himself and the seventy. Here we contend is a sample of imparity in the ministry, perfectly according with that which God established among the Jews, and proving indisputably that Christ did not change the order of the Jewish Priesthood, but sanctioned it, thereby instructing us that the same regimen should continue in subsequent ages. This fact Episcopalians offer as an insurmountable evidence to prove the correctness of the Episcopal form of Church government.

We now come to the commencement of the Apostolic age. Let us examine the commission of our Saviour to his Apostles. Being about to ascend, and by his ascension to take away from his visible kingdom, its visible head, Christ imparts to his Apostles, his supreme visible authority—As his Father had sent *him*, so he sent them, to disciple all nations. This commission of our Saviour,

of course gave to his Apostles, full power to preside over and govern his Church, and perpetuate the ministry by a transmition of their authority to successors—Said he " Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." When the Apostles were thus first empowered, at Christ's ascension, we find but this one grade of officers in the Apostolic Church; but this grade is the highest ; is clothed with power competent to fill up the other grades as necessity required, and to complete an *Apostolic* ministry answering in all its parts to that appointed by Heaven among the Jews, and that found in the practice of Christ. I shall now proceed to prove that the *Apostles did do this*, and that in their history, the Episcopal form of government is plainly set forth and taught.

In discussing any subject, it is essential to the discovery of truth, and to bringing the discussion to a speedy issue, that the precise points to be proved should be clearly ascertained, and the proposition plainly and definitively stated. The essential characteristic principles of Episcopacy are—that there are three grades of ministers instituted by *Christ and his Apostles*, that the *first* grade, in addition to the ministerial powers, pos-

sees the *sole power of ordination*, with the *right* of exercising *supreme authority* over the *congregations and ministers* who may be subject to them.

From this statement of the *essentials* of Episcopacy, the following conclusions will result. 1. That it is immaterial by what *names* these grades of the ministry are distinguished—"mere names are of little value." "It is for the *thing* not the name, we contend."* Desperate indeed must be the cause of the gentlemen, who have opposed me on this subject, when they predicate their whole arguments on *names* which every one concedes, were applied to the same orders. Who would think of infering that our Saviour was no more than an *Apostle* or *Bishop*, because these names are applied to him ?† Or, who would think that the *Consuls* of the present day, are the same with those of the Roman Republic, because they are distinguished by the same names ?

2. Nor do Episcopalians contend that in an *extensive* and *unqualified* sense, there is any form of Church government of *divine right*. When applied to the *orders of the ministry*, they contend

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* W. McLoed's Eccl. Catechism.
† Heb. III. Pet. II. 25.

it is ; but when the term government, is applied to the particular *manner* in which the powers of the office are exercised they contend that it is not divine. In other words, that the particular *government* of the Church is not to be identified with the *ministry.* This principle was contended for by the celebrated Hooker and others—Non-Episcopalians, seizing this circumstance, have endeavoured to make much of it in support of their cause. But the only point for which we contend, is that *Bishops*, *Priests* and *Deacons*, with their appropriate powers, are of divine *Apostolical institution.*

I now proceed to establish this position by Scripture authority. I have already observed that under the Jewish dispensation, we find three orders in the ministry, under the titles of *High Priest*, *Priest* and *Levite ;* that when Christ appeared to establish the Gospel dispensation, there were subordinate to Him, the High Priest of our profession, the *Apostles*,* and the *seventy*†. It is my intention now to prove, that after the ascension of Christ, we find the *ministry* constituted under the three grades of *Apostles*, *Elders or Presby-*

* Luke vi. 12. 13. † Luke x. 1.

ters, sometimes called *Bishops* and *Deacons*; and that these grades have been maintained in the Christian Church to the present day. There can be no question but that on the ascension of our Saviour, the Apostles possessed the powers of the ministry, and the sole power of transmitting the ministerial authority. To deny this, would be to deny that Christ left any visible authority in his Church. To prove that the Apostles did exercise this authority, and appoint successors of equal authority with themselves, as well as constitute two other grades in the ministry, viz. *Elders or Presbyters* and Deacons, I shall invite your attention to a view of the two churches, the one at *Crete* and the one at *Ephesus*. In Titus 1. 5. it is said, by the Apostle, "for this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain Elders in every city." Let us notice the circumstances that attended this transaction, and see what inferences we can draw from it.

St. Paul had planted the Gospel in the island of Crete. He had made proselytes in every city, who stood in need of the ministrations of Presbyters. He speaks not to Titus, as if he had left him in Crete, to convert the cities to the faith. He speaks as if this work was already accomplish-

ed; as if the way was paved for the establishment of the Church. These being the circumstances of the case, it appears to me that this transaction carries on its face, a proof of superiority on the part of Titus, to the Presbyters or Elders. Will it be imagined, much less affirmed by any reasonable man, that St. Paul had converted so many cities on this island, without having ordained any Elders amongst them; when it was his uniform and invariable practice to ordain Elders in every country in which he made proselytes?—What! would he neglect to ordain those amongst them, who were absolutely necessary to transact the affairs of the Church during his absence? Would he have left the work he had begun, half performed? Influenced by the Holy Ghost, would he have left those numerous proselytes he had made, without an *instructor* and *pastor*, and exposed them to the errors from which he had redeemed them? It is incredible.

These considerations are sufficient to convince every unprejudiced mind, that there were Elders or Presbyters in the Church of Crete, at the time St. Paul left Titus on that Island. And if there were Presbyters, and those Presbyters had the power of ordination, why was it necessary to leave Ti-

tus amongst them, in order to perform a task that might as well have been accomplished without him? If the Presbyters possessed an authority equal to that of Titus, would not St. Paul, by leaving him amongst them, have taken the surest way to interrupt the peace of the Church—to engender jealousy, strifes and contentions?

Again—Let us view this transaction in another point of light. St. Paul had made converts, as I have said, in every city of Crete. Titus had attended him on his last visit to that Island. If Presbyters were at this time considered as competent to the task of ordaining others, why did he not ordain one at any rate, during his stay amongst them, and commission him, instead of detaining Titus, to ordain Elders in every city? The efforts of Titus were as much wanted, as his own to carry the light of the Gospel to other nations, who had not received it. Why was it necessary that Titus should ordain Elders in *every* city? After the ordination of a *few*, would not his exertions become useless, if *they* were able to complete the work which he had begun?

Gentlemen, the fact is, that Titus was placed over the Presbyters, and over all the Churches in all the cities of Crete. He was intrusted with all

the authority of a supreme ruler of the Church. He was directed to ordain Presbyters—to rebuke with all authority—to admonish Heretics, and in case of obstinacy to reject them from the communion of the Church. And these, gentlemen, are the peculiar prerogatives of our Bishops—These circumstances infallibly designate the presence of a *Diocesan Bishop.* Accordingly we find the united voice of antiquity, declares Titus to have been the first Bishop of Crete. Eusebius informs us " that he received Episcopal authority over the Church of Crete." So also says Theodoret, St. Chrysostom, St. Jerome and St. Ambrose. If these considerations united, do not show that Titus possessed powers superior to those which were held by the Presbyters of those Churches, I know not what considerations would. Here then gentlemen, we present you with two grades of the Christian ministry in the Apostolic age.

But I have other evidence to offer you to the same purpose. The case of Timothy alone, had we no other evidence from Scripture, would when taken in connection with ancient writers, be perfectly satisfactory to me. This alone demonstrates all we can desire. He was placed by St.

Paul to superintend the Church at Ephesus. This case is even stronger than that of Titus at Crete. It cannot be denied that there had long been Presbyters in the Church of Ephesus. Listen then to the language which St Paul speaks in his epistle to him, and see if it is possible that he possessed no superiority over the *Presbyters* of that Church. "I besought thee, says he to Timothy, to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." Would Timothy have been commissioned to charge the Presbyters to teach no other doctrine, had he possessed no superiority over them? Would they not have had a right to resist any attempts at a controul of this kind, as an encroachment on their privileges.

Again—Timothy is directed to try and examine the Deacons, whether they be blameless or not. If they prove themselves worthy, he is to admit them into the office of a Deacon; and upon a faithful discharge of *that* office, they are to be elevated to a higher station. "Likewise" says he, "must the Deacons be grave, not double tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience." "Let these also be first proved, and then let them

use the office of a Deacon being found blameless."

Here Gentlemen, we find the *third* order in the ministry, the *order of Deacons ;* but we here find no mention made of the Presbyters of Ephesus, in the ordination of these Deacons. They are not associated with Timothy at all in the work. Does not this indicate, does it not demonstrate a superiority of power on the part of Timothy. Timothy is also exhorted to lay " hands suddenly on no man." There is no such thing as a recognition even of the *co-operation* of Presbyters with him. He seems to be the *supreme* and *only* agent in the transaction of these affairs.

I appeal gentlemen, to the common sense of mankind, whether if the Presbyters of Ephesus had possessed any authority equal to that of Timothy ; whether if they had, like him, possessed the power of ordination, St. Paul would not have recognized their agency in connection with his ? Would it not have been treating them with improper neglect not to mention them ? But gentlemen, what consummates our evidence on this point, and places the subject beyond all doubt, is the charge which St. Paul gives to Timothy, in relation to the penal discipline he was to exercise over his Presbyters. Timothy, is required

to "receive an accusation against an Elder or Presbyter, only before two or three witnesses." "Then (that is, those among the Presbyters) that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear." Can any one imagine that Timothy would have been commissioned to *listen to accusations made against Presbyters*, and openly to *rebuke* them, had not his authority transcended theirs? Does not this single circumstance establish the point of his superiority and present him to us in every sense, a Dioceasan Bishop? "The man says," a learned and ingenious writer of our country, who shall not find a Bishop in Ephesus, will be puzzled to find one in England."* I cannot conceive of a case that would be more clear and unequivocal, that would speak more loudly to the common sense of mankind, than the case of Timothy in Ephesus. He is obviously entrusted with Apostolic authority. Every thing which the Apostle could do in his own person, he commissions Timothy to perform in his absence. All that we ever find the Apostles did do, except Miraculous works, we find Timothy commanded to do. He is to *adjust the affairs of the Church*—he

*Dr. Bowden in answer to Dr. Stiles.

is to *prove and examine Deacons*—he alone is to *ordain* them—he alone is recognized in the performance of the task of *ordaining Elders or Presbyters*—he possesses *perfect controul* over these Presbyters. If they are guilty of any offence or misdemeanors, he is to inflict *punishment* upon them. Indeed I cannot conceive of a case more satisfactory in proof of the Apostolical original, of the Episcopal form of Church government. Had Timothy been of the same order with the Presbyters of Ephesus, can it be imagined that the Apostle would, by elevating him to such high privileges amongst them, have endangered the peace of the Church, have taken a step so well calculated to excite discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the remaining Presbyters or Elders? This cannot be imagined. Timothy was undeniably then intrusted with Episcopal authority in the Church of Ephesus; he was the Bishop of that place, which had congregations and Presbyters in *every* city. He had the care and controul of a district of the Church, a Diocese. So Eusebius tells us. "He was the first Bishop of the Province or Diocease of Ephesus," says he.

Will it be said, that the office which Timothy

held, expired with him ? That it did *not*, is evident from the very nature of the office ; for there is the same need of an officer now in the Church, who can ordain, as there was in the days of Timothy ; and accordingly we find, from the testimony of antiquity, that he had his successors. Will any one object and say, perhaps Timothy and Titus were not settled officers but *itinerant Bishops*—that they sustained no fixed and permanent relation to the Churches of Ephesus or Crete? I answer that were this even strictly true, still it would not impair our argument. Whatever time Timothy staid at Ephesus, he ordained Elders and regulated all the affairs of the Church. This proves his superiority. Now if it was necessary to send such an officer to *Ephesus* as *Timothy*, to ordain Elders where there were Elders before, it must have been equally necessary when he left it, that an officer of his rank, should take his place for the same purpose. Accordingly we find from the ancients, that this was really the case.

1. From a fragment of a treatise by Polycrates Bishop of Ephesus, towards the close of the second century. " Timothy," says he, " was ordained Bishop of Ephesus by the great Paul."

2. It appears from Eusebius* who says, " it is recorded in history, that *Timothy* was the first Bishop of Ephesus."

3. From the commentary under the name of Ambrose ? He says, " being now ordained a Bishop, Timothy was instructed by the epistle of Paul, how to dispose and order the Church of God."

4. From Epiphanius,† who says, " the Apostle, speaking to Timothy, being then a Bishop, advises him thus, " rebuke not an Elder," &c.

5. By Leontius,‡ Bishop of Magnesia, one of the Fathers in the great council of Chalcedon, who declared, that " from Timothy to their time, there had been twenty six Bishops of the Church of Ephesus." Here gentlemen, is a succession of the office of Timothy kept up. The evidence upon this point, from the early writers, is so full, that Timothy was a *permanent* Bishop of the Church at Ephesus, and that he had successors, that there can be not the least doubt left upon any gentleman's mind. I might still quote other

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* Eccles. Hist. lib. iii. cap. 4. 2 Prefat, in Epist. ad Tim.
† Haer. 75. n. 5.
‡ Com. Chal. act. ii.

authorities but it is certainly needless. I shall therefore produce but one quotation more which shall be from Chrysostom. Saith he, "it is manifest Timothy was intrusted with a whole nation, viz. Asia."*

Unless, therefore, gentlemen, it is an immaterial circumstance, that Timothy ruled the whole Church of Ephesus, both clergy and people, the Elders or Presbyters being subject to his spiritual jurisdiction; unless it be an immaterial circumstance that Timothy exercised the power of ordaining ministers, and thus of conveying the sacerdotal authority, and unless it be an immaterial circumstance also, that so many venerable ancient writers declare the same things, there cannot be a question but that the Apostle St. Paul did transmit his Apostolic authority to Timothy and Titus, that they did transmit it to others; that there were Presbyters and Deacons at Ephesus, in the church under the government of Timothy. Indeed there cannot be a question but that there was a complete Episcopal government at Ephesus in the Apostolic age, constituted by the Apostles, and consisting of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

* Hom. 15. in I Tim. chap. 4.

God knows gentlemen, I wish not to mislead a single son of Adam. In the facts presented to you, there is no equivocating, there is no sophistry. You are as capable as myself of drawing inferences. I promised to prove the Episcopal regimen of Church government to be Apostolic. I might, I think safely rest my argument here; but I must still beg your indulgence for a few moments longer.

Permit me then to introduce to your notice one other fact, recorded in the Scriptures, which goes directly to prove that the primitive government of the Christian Church, was Episcopal. It is to be found in the Book of Revelations.

St. John introduces our Lord, addressing seven epistles to the *seven Angels* of the *seven Churches* of Asia. The Epistles could not have been addressed to the collective body of Christians in the Churches; for they are designated by the *seven Candle sticks*, which are distinguished from the *seven* stars, by which the *Angels* are denoted.

The Angels were evidently *single* persons. They are uniformly addressed as such. And that those seven *Angels* were Bishops of the *seven Dioceasan* Churches of Proconsular Asia, I think is indisputable, from the concurring testimony of the

Fathers of that age, and the *address* which is made to the several Churches. At the time St. John wrote the *Revelations* in the island of Patmos, in the year 95, Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch. He again and again tells us, what the Bishops of his day were, that they were indeed Dioceasan in every sense of the word. " The acts of the Church," says Blondel, " whether they were glorious or infamous, were imputed to their *exarchs* or chief *governors*."*

The *Angel* of the Church of Pergamos is celebrated for his personal virtues ; yet some neglect was imputed to him as a governor *I have a few things against thee* (saith the Lord). *Thou hast them who hold the doctrine of Balaam. So also them who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.* And he is severely threatened unless he repented ; which proves that he had authority to correct these disorders. The same may be said of the *Angel* of *Thyatira*, who is blamed for suffering " *Jezebel*, who called herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce the people." And the *Angel* of *Sardis* is commanded *to be watchful, and to strengthen those who are ready to die* ; otherwise, our Lord

* Blon. Apol. Pref. p. 6. quoted by Burscough.

threatens to come on him as a *thief in the night.* Since then these *Angels* had full power of reforming abuses; since the neglect of reformation is entirely imputed to them; and since there are none joined in commission with them, whose votes were necessary to enable them to act; it is evident that they had the supreme power in their respective Churches. If these *Angels* had been no more than Presbyters, when our Lord blamed and threatened the Angel of the Church of Sardis, he might have said "Lord, why blamest thou me? I have no more authority in thy Church in this city, than other Presbyters. We do every thing as thou well knowest, by a plurality of votes, and those Presbyters, who wish a majority for the purpose of beginning the work of reformation, have not been yet able to obtain it. I need not tell thee, that I am no more than the Moderator of the Presbytery, *appointed to count their votes and keep order.** Upon what dictate then of reason, upon what principle of justice, am I to be blamed for the defects and corruptions in the Church? As a *Moderator*, I have no relation whatever to the *Church;* my relation is entirely

* Miller's Letters.

to the Presbytery, and there I have but a casting vote. What then can I do? Why am I addressed in particular, and threatened with excision, unless I repent? For my personal faults I humbly beg forgiveness, but I cannot possibly acknowledge my guilt as a *governor* of this church, when I bear no such character." No gentlemen, we cannot suppose these Angels Presbyters, nor even presidents of Presbyteries, without involving ourselves in the most palpable difficulties. But upon the Episcopal system all is right. The seven Angels are so many individuals; they are blamed for certain corruptions in their respective churches, and their Presbyters and Deacons are not blamed in the least. The *Angels*, therefore, must have had power to correct these abuses, and must have had jurisdiction over these Presbyters and Deacons. They must have been in the complete sense of the word, *Diocesan Bishops*.

Here then, gentlemen, we have another Scripture fact, establishing our position, and proving that the charge now before you, is as unjust as it is cruel. After these luminous authorities—authorities which prove beyond the power of contradiction, that the Apostles established three orders in the Church, and that *Diocesan Episcopacy*

is a *Scripture* and *primitive* institution, I shall not deem it necessary at present to present you with any further arguments from the Bible; but shall only detain you to hear a few authorities from the early Fathers. This I do, gentlemen, not because my subject stands in need of more light, but to show you, and this whole assembly, that I have not mistaken, or mistated the facts to which I have referred. And I am not displeased with the restriction, which the Rev. Gentleman, who last spoke, has made in reference to the Early Fathers. I am willing to go to the two first centuries, and if I proceed with my quotations to after ages, it will be rather to shew that every century was uniform in their opinions and practice with respect to the Priesthood, than to establish the fact for which I contend. Now, gentlemen, those early writers, who lived in the Apostolic age and the age immediately succeeding, knew all about the Christian Priesthood. It was a matter of *fact* which they saw with their eyes and heard with their ears. They could no more have been deceived respecting the Apostolic regimen of the Priesthood, than we can be deceived respecting the provisions of the American Constitution. If *they* then understood the fact as

we do; if they spoke of Bishops, Priests and Deacons, in the same manner as we have seen them set forth in the Churches of Crete, Ephesus and the Proconsular Asia, their testimony will be so strongly corroborative that it must produce conviction doubly firm. Let us appeal to those primitive, those venerable men.

In the year 70 of our Lord, lived Clement; a glorious Martyr, whose praise is in the Gospel, and of whom particular mention is made, Phill. iv. 3. He speaks thus, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians parag. 40. Oxf. Edition. "To the High-Priest his proper office was appointed; the Priests had their proper order, and the Levites their peculiar services, or Deaconships, and the Laymen what was proper for Laymen." In this instance, Clement is speaking of the distribution of offices in the Christian Church, and plainly sets forth Bishops, Priests and Deacons and to the office of Levites he gives its proper Christian title, "*Deacon.*"

In the beginning of the 2d century St. Ignatius, a Martyr of Christ, was constituted, by the Apostles, Bishop of Antioch. In his Epistle to the Magnesians, he tells them, that they "ought not to despise their Bishop, but to pay him all

manner of reverence, according to the commandment of God, the Father"—"and as I know your holy Presbyters do." Therefore, as Christ did nothing without the Father, so neither do ye, whether Presbyter, Deacon, or Laic, any thing without the *Bishop*." "I exhort you to do all things in the same mind of God, the Bishop presiding in the place of God; and the Presbyters in the room of the College of the Apostles; and the Deacons, most beloved in me, who are intrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ." Does the gentleman term this language weak? What then would he account strong and explicit? This quotation plainly teaches us that this Father understood that Episcopacy was the regimen of his day—that it was appointed by God—that after the ascension of Christ, the Apostles and their successors, the Bishops, took the place of *Christ* as to *visible power and office*, and that the Presbyters took the place which the Apostles held in Christ's day; *for saith he*, "*the Bishop presiding in the place of God.*" Now Gentlemen, Ignatius knew how this matter stood; he knew the Apostolic practice—he was perfectly acquainted with the Apostolic institutions—he knew their history, and was perfectly acquainted with the Priesthood.

He was no knave that he should misrepresent, nor indeed had he any inducement to misrepresent.

Again—In his Epistle to the Church at Philadelphia, he exhorts them "to give heed to the Bishop, and to the Presbytery, and to the Deacons—Without the Bishop do nothing." In his six Epistles, which he wrote on his way to martyrdom, he fully and explicitly avows his belief of the derivation of the Episcopal order from the Apostles. In his Epistle to the Trallians, he says, "what is the Bishop, but he who hath all authority and power? What is the Presbytery, but a sacred constitution of counsellors and assessors to the Bishop? What are the Deacons, but imitators of Christ."

He mentions several of his cotemporary Bishops, "Onesimus, Bishop of the Ephesians Polycarp, of the Smyrnians, Polybius, of the Trallians, and Damas, of the Magnesians; and he at the same time commends the Presbyters and Deacons, for their obedience to them. So in the beginning of his Epistle to the Magnesians—"having been so happy as to see you, by your worthy Bishop, Damas, and your worthy Presbyters, Bassus and Apolinus, and Zotion your Deacon, whom I cannot but commend for his obedience to his Bishop

and the Presbytery." Here then is a Father of the Gentleman's own choice—one of the second century—and if he can make a Presbyterian of him, I will give him full credit for his ingenuity.

Gentlemen, we have seen that this Father makes express mention of a number of Bishops, in different parts of the Christian world; and since he uniformly speaks of them as divinely ordained, I infer, that about ten years after the death of St. John, no Churches were without them.

Thus much then, we are assured of, by the testimony of Ignatius—that in the Apostolic age and that immediately succeeding, Bishops were universally at the head of the churches; that they derived their authority from the hands of the Apostles, and by virtue of that authority, they are superior to all other ecclesiastical officers.

About seventy years from the Apostolic age, flourished Ireneus, first *Presbyter*, afterwards *Bishop* of Lyons, in France. "We," says he, "can reckon up those, whom the Apostles ordained *Bishops* in the several churches, and who they were that succeeded them down to our times." He then adds, that as it would be endless to enumerate the *succession of Bishops* in all the churches, he would instance in that of Rome"—

which succession he brings down to Eleutherius, who was the 12th from the Apostles, and filled the Episcopal chair when Ireneus wrote this treatise.

I shall now, Gentlemen, present you with a few extracts from the Apostolical Canons which are of very early date, and may with propriety be brought in at the age of which I am now speaking.

Canon 1. Let a Bishop be consecrated by two or three Bishops.

Canon 2. "Let a Presbyter and Deacon be ordained by one Bishop." Here the power of ordination is lodged in one person, the Bishop, and not in the Presbytery.

Canon 15. "If any Presbyter or Deacon shall leave his own parish and go to another, without the Bishop's leave, he shall officiate no longer; especially, if he obey not the Bishop when he exhorts him to return, persisting in his insolence and disorderly behaviour; but he shall be reduced to communicate only as a layman."

Canon 32. "If any Presbyter despising his own Bishop, shall gather congregations apart, and erect another altar, his Bishop not being convicted of wickedness, or irreligion; let him be deposed as an ambitious person: and likewise such

other clergy or laity, who shall join themselves to him, shall be excommunicated."

Take next the authority of Turtullian. In his treatise de Prescript C. 32. he challenges the Hereticks, "to produce the original of their Churches, to show the succession of their Bishops from the beginning, so as to make it appear that the first of their Bishops had an Apostle, or some Apostolic person for his author, or ordainer, or predecessor. For thus Apostolic Churches produce the registers or records of their extraction, as the Church of the Smyrnians, their Polycarp settled by St. John; the Romans their Clemens, ordained by St. Peter, answerably to what other Churches do, who prove their Apostolic original, or that they are the posterity of the Apostles, by exhibiting them who were constituted their Bishops by the Apostles."

The same author, in his book about Baptism against Quintilla, in answer to the question, who may baptise? says, "The High-Priest, who is the Bishop, hath the power of giving baptism; and after him, (or in subordination to him) Presbyters, and Deacons; but not without the Bishop's authority."—I would appeal to you gentlemen, whether there can be plainer or more expli-

cit authority than this. The testimony of this Father is as unanswerable as that of Ignatius. Here are the three officers designated, and their powers and stations plainly and explicitly assigned; all exactly comporting with the Scripture account, which we drew from the facts adduced from the acts and declarations of the Apostles.

The next authority to which I appeal, is Origen, the famous Catechist and Presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, who flourished about the year 330. He, in his explanation of the Lord's Prayer, upon the words, "forgive us our debts," mentions other debts—"There is a debt to the widow, another to the Deacon, another to the Presbyter, and then that to the Bishop, which our Saviour requires of the whole Church, and that he will punish them who neglect to pay it." And in his commentary on St. Matthew, he is equally express—there is a necessity," says he, "that we should depress the opinion of those who highly esteem themselves, because brought up under parents professing Christianity; and especially if they are exalted on account of their parents or progenitors, who had attained to that dignity in the Church, to sit on the Bishop's throne,

or to have the honour of Presbyters, or Deacons, to minister to God's people." These quotations gentlemen, need no comment. From them we come down to the age of Cyprian, who was the most celebrated man of the third century. He flourished about the year 250, at which time he was Bishop of Carthage.

It will appear from monuments of the third century, that there were several considerable acts of authority, relating to the government and discipline of the church, which belonged solely to the Bishop; for it will be abundantly evident, that he could, in these cases, exercise this authority without the concurrence of any other church governor—He had for instance, the sole power of *confirmation.* For this we have St. Cyprian's express testimony, in his Epistle to Jubianus, where he says, "it was the custom to offer such as were baptised, to the Bishops, that by their prayers, and the laying on of their hands, they might receive the Holy Ghost, and be consummated by the sign of our Lord."

So likewise, the Bishop had the sole power of ordination. In St. Cyprian's 38th Epistle, it will be seen that having while absent, ordained Aurelius, a Lector, he acquaints his Presbyters

and Deacons with it—" In all clerical ordinations, most dear Brethren, I used to consult you before hand, and examine the manners and merits of every one with common advice." But in this instance, he proceeds to tell them, that he had departed from his ordinary rule.

We have another remarkable instance in his 41st Epistle where he says, that because of his absence from Carthage, he had given a deputation to Caldonius and Herculaneus, two Bishops, and to Rogatianus and Numidicus two of his Presbyters, " to examine the ages, qualifications and merits of some in Carthage, that he, whose province it was, to promote men to ecclesiastical offices, might be well informed about them, and promote none but such as were meek, humble and worthy." Indeed, gentlemen, Cyprian is very explicit and very abundant in his testimony, that the Church, in his day was purely Dioceasan. It is impossible that he, or any of the earlier Fathers, whom I have quoted, could be deceived upon this subject, or could have misrepresented it. In short, I cannot see but we shall be driven to the dreadful necessity of denying the Scriptures, in denying that Episcopacy was the regimen of the Christian and Apostolic Church. Men in some

instances, in order to get rid of the testimony of these Fathers, have assailed them with ridicule, and boldly denied their authority. But gentlemen should be careful how they resort to such means, inasmuch as it is by the testimony of these same Fathers, that the divinity of the Scriptures is established. Should an infidel deny their authority, and laugh at their internal evidence, to what shall we appeal to support the divinity of that sacred volume? Surely to the *ancients*, who testify that they received it from Christ and his Apostles.

I proceed Gentlemen, with my testimony, and come down to Athanasius, the celebrated Bishop of Alexandria, who flourished in the early part of the 4th century. In his first apology, he upbraids the Arians with their persecutions and in recounting what violences they were guilty of, he shows how they had forced away many Bishops, as Ammonius, Thamus and others, whom he there names; so also Hierax and Dioscorus, who were only Presbyters, thus plainly distinguishing those offices. And page 765, of the same apology, he shows how his enemies, the Arians, not only received Arians into their communion, but also advanced them to higher offices in the Church;

raising some from Deacons to be Presbyters, and others from Presbyters to be Bishops ;—by which he clearly distinguishes the *gradations* of these officers also.*

Jerome, who likewise lived in the 4th century, is also very explicit in his testimony respecting the validity of Episcopal regimen. In his Epistle to Nepot, he says, "what Aaron and his sons were, that, we know the Bishops and the Presbyters are." If so, then, as Aaron, by divine right, was superior to his sons, the Priests, so the Bishops must be superior to the Presbyters.

Having gentlemen, exhausted myself and I fear your patience also, I shall rest my arguments upon these authorities, without proceeding down to the later writers. Indeed this would be a task entirely useless, because there is no dispute, but that Episcopacy universally prevailed in the Christian Church, as early as the 4th century. And even should any have the boldness to deny this, every one the least acquainted with ecclesiastical History, would perceive the fallacy of such denial.

Gentlemen, I shall trespass on your kind indul-

* Brokesby's Hist. of the Gov. of the Prim. Ch. p. 145.

gence but a few moments longer. I will only add, that if it were possible, after all the facts and testimony I have offered in the progress of this discussion, for any doubts to remain, as to the justice of the claims of the Episcopal Church, to be Apostolic and primitive in her doctrines and institutions, there is one other fact, that must remove these doubts from every imprejudiced mind. I allude to the account given by Dr. Buchanan, of the condition in which he found the Syrian Church. By this account, assurance is made doubly sure, that the reformers of that Church from which the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States is descended, were not mistaken when they asserted, in the preface to the office of ordination, that from the Apostles' time there have been three orders of ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

Speaking of Dr. Buchanan's narrative, that celebrated work, the Christian Observer says, " it is impossible for one who is a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, not to feel a peculiar degree of gratification, in perusing the account of the Syrian Christians. The similarity of our faith and mode of worship, of our ecclesiastical constitution, and even of our minuter rites and cere-

monies to those which prevail in the Syrian Church, is very remarkable, and affords one additional presumption, of the Apostolic origin which we have been disposed to attribute to them. We have in both Churches, the same gradations of rank, Bishop, Priest and Deacon."*

Dr. Buchanan informs us, that the history of the Syrian Church is traced back to the Church of Antioch, where disciples were first called Christians—That they have never had the least intercourse with Rome, and never heard of such a person as a Pope, until the 16th century—Here then Gentlemen, are two Churches, existing for sixteen centuries, in quarters of the world far removed from each other—nay, even without the nations in which they were respectively situated having any commerce together; and yet both tracing their history back to Christ, and his Apostles—both maintaining the same regimen of Church order, and both claiming to receive it by transmission from Christ. In short we here find the *same church*, existing for ages, in quarters of the globe widely separated not only, but which have had no intercourse with each other. This, Gen-

* Ch. Obs. 1811. p. 317—320.

tlemen, is a fact to prove the divine origin of Episcopacy, which no sophistry can evade and which no one will have the hardihood to gainsay.*

And now gentlemen, I have to refer it to your learning and discriminating judgment, whether the fact is not as clear as the sun in the heavens, that the primitive regimen of the Christian Church was Episcopal. Indeed is it not a remarkable fact in the holy religion of our God and Saviour, that such an identity of order in the Priesthood, has been maintained in the Church, under every dispensation of Heaven? This is a striking sample of that beautiful, that divine harmony which pervades the works and word of God. Christ stiles his Church, his *Body*—his Kingdom—his *Family*—He *purchased it with his blood*—He appointed it as the school, in which immortal souls should be prepared to perform the high range of duty in Heaven. In it, he ordained a Priesthood, which should be instrumental in the salvation of his redeemed. However we may admire then, it is no

* It is not less singular than true that this account of Dr. Buchanan has had such an effect upon the minds of some gentlemen, opposed to the Episcopal faith, that in a late edition of Buchanan's work, the editor has taken the liberty to leave out entirely the above interesting account of the existence of Episcopal Regimen among the Syrian Christians. Let the reader consult the several editions of Buchanan's work, and he will be satisfied of the truth of this statement.

subject of wonder that he has maintained by his own mighty arm, a similarity of regimen in that Priesthood, in every age, and that in his providence, he has preserved even a record of the names* of those men who have from time to time succeeded in the highest order of his Church.

*It is one of the most curious monuments of antiquity, that in the providence of God, a catalogue of the names of the High-Priests, from Aaron to Christ, is preserved in the Scriptures, and that another of the Apostles and the Bishops, their successors, from Christ to us. is easily traced in profane history. This circumstance alone, has such weight in proving the divine right of Episcopal regimen, that the Reporter thinks proper to record the

CATALOGUE AS FOLLOWS :

Jewish High-Priests, from Aaron to the days of Christ.

1 Aaron,
2 Eleazar,
3 Phineas,
4 Abishua,
5 Bukki,
6 Uzzi,
7 Zerahiah,
8 Meraioth,
9 Amariah,
10 Ahitub,
11 Zadok,
12 Ahimaaz,
13 Azariah,
14 Johanan,
15 Azariah,
16 Amariah,
17 Ahitub,
18 Zadoc,
19 Shallum,
20 Hilkiah,
21 Azariah,
22 Seraiah,
23 Jehozadak,
During the captivity they were,
24 Josue,
25 Joakim,
26 Eliashil,
27 Jehoida the 2d,
28 Jonathan,
29 Jaddus,
30 Onias 1st,
31 Simon the just,
32 Elazer 2d,
33 Manasses,
34 Onias 2d,
35 Simon 2d,
36 Onias the 3d,
37 Jason,
38 Menelaus. a Simoniack,
39 Lysmachus,
40 Alcimus,
to 3886 of the world, and of Rome 586.
41 Matathias,
42 Judas Macabaeus,
43 Jonathas,
44 Simon 3d,
45 John, called Hircan,
46 Aristobulus,
47 Alexander Jannius,
48 Hyrcan,
49 Aristobulus,

For it is natural that he should protect that Priesthood, which is the very life blood of his visible *body*, which he instituted for the high, the blessed purpose of admitting redeemed man to himself, and of being instrumental in fitting immortal souls for the high employ of worshipping

50 Hyrcan re-established,
51 Antigonus,
52 Ananel,
53 Aristobulus,
54 Ananel re-established,
55 Jesu, son of Phabes,
56 Simon,
57 Matthias,
58 Joazar,
59 Eleazer 3d,
60 Jesus, son of Sias,
61 Ismael,
62 Eleazar 4th,
63 Simon,
64 Caiaphas,
65 Jonathas and his brother Theophilus,
66 Simon, sir named Cantheras,
67 Matthias 2d,
68 Elionee,
69 Simon Cantheras re-established.
70 Joseph, called Caba.
71 Ananus,
72 Ismael,
73 Joseph,
74 Ananus, son of Ananus,
75 Jesus, son of Damneus,
76 Jesus son of Gamaliel,
77 Matthias 3d,
78 Phanasus was High Priest when Jerusalem was taken in the year 61.

A list of Bishops who succeeded each other from the Apostles down to the year 1817.

A. D. 44 St. Peter and St. Paul,
70 Linus,
81 Cletus,
93 Clemens,
103 Anacletus,
112 Euarestus,
121 Alexander,
132 Sextus,
142 Telesphorus,
154 Hygenus,
158 Pius,
167 Anicetus,
175 Soter,
179 Eleutherius,
194 Victor,
203 Zepherinus,
221 Calistus,
227 Urbanus,
233 Pontianus,
238 Antherus,
239 Fabianus,
254 Cornelius,
255 Lucius,
257 Stephanus,
260 Sixtus, 2nd.
261 Dionysius,
273 Filix, 1st.
275 Eutychianus,
284 Cajus,
297 Marcellinus,
304 Marcellus,
309 Eusebius,

him in the realms of his glory. It has been my happy lot to belong to his Church ; it is my great honour to be admitted into his Priesthood—High is the station, for a creature so humble, so unworthy—May the Great, the Glorious Head, grant, of the fulness of his grace, to his whole Church, both

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311 Miltiades,
314 Sylvester,
336 Marcus,
337 Julius,
352 Liberius,
385 Felix, 2nd.
367 Damasus,
375 Siricius,
398 Anastacius,
402 Innocentius,
417 Zozimus,
419 Bonifacius, 1st.
424 Coelestinus,
432 Sextus, 3d.
440 Leo Magnus,
461 S. Hilarius,
468 Simplicius,
483 Felix, 3d.
492 S. Gelasius,
497 Anastasius,
499 Symmachus,
514 Hormisda,
524 Joannes, 1st.
526 Felix, 4th.
530 Bonafacius, 2nd.
532 Joannes, 2nd.
535 Agapetus,
537 Sylverius,
540 Virgilius,
555 Palagias,
560 Joannes, 3d.
573 Benidictus,
578 Pelagius,
590 Gregorius Magnus.
596 Augustinus Monachus
614 Laurentius,
619 Melitus,
624 Justus,
634 Honorius,
654 Adeodatus,
668 Theodorus,
693 Brithwaldus,
731 Fatwinus,
735 Nothelmus,
740 Cuthbertus,
759 Bregwinus,
762 Lambertus,
791 Athelardus,
804 Wolfredus,
829 Theogildus,
830 Ceolnothus,
871 Atheldredus,
889 Pleigmundus,
915 Athelmus,
924 Wolfelmus,
934 Odo,
959 Dunstan,
988 Ethelgarus,
990 Siricius,
993 Alfricus,
1006 Elfegus,
1013 Livingus,
1020 Agelnothus,
1038 Eadlinus,
1050 Robertus,
1052 Stigandus,
1070 Lanfrancus,
1089 Anselm,
1114 Rodolphus,
1122 William Corboyl,

ministry and people, to you, and to us all, for Christ's sake.

Presbyter Tertius. The Right Rev. Gentleman has no doubt exhausted the powers of his body as well as mind, in the support of his subject, and to my mind, with very ill success. I hope it

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1133 Theobaldus,
1162 Thomas Becket,
1171 Richardus Monachus,
1184 Baldwin
1191 Reginald Fitz-Jocelin
1193 Hubert Walter,
1206 Stephen Langton,
1229 Richard Wethershed,
1234 Edmund,
1244 Boniface,
1272 Robert Kilwarby,
1278 John Peckam,
1294 Robert Wenchelsey,
1313 Walter Reynolds,
1327 Simon Mepham,
1333 John Stratford,
1348 Thomas Bradwarden
1349 Simon Islippe,
1366 Simon Langham,
1367 William Whittlesey,
1375 Simon Sudbury,
1381 William Courtney,
1396 Thomas Arundel,
1414 Henry Chicheley,
1443 John Stafford,
1452 John Hemp,
1454 Thomas Bourchier,
1486 John Morton,
1502 Henry Dean,
1504 William Warham,
1533 Thomas Cranmer, first Protestant Bishop,
1555 Reginald Pool,
1559 Mathew Parker,
1575 Edmund Grindal,
1583 John Whitgift,
1604 Richard Bancroft,
1610 Geo. Abbot,
1633 William Laud,
1660 William Juxton,
1662 James Sharp.

Those who succeeded Bishop Sharp, in the English Episcopate were*

Gilbert Shelton,
W. Sancrofth,
J. Tillotson,
Thomas Tennisson,
Wm. Wake,
J. Potter,
Thomas Herring,
Thomas Seckar,
—— Cornwallis.

John Moore living 1802, who with William Markham and other Bishops, consecrated Bishop White now living in Pennsylvania, and Bishop Provost, late of New-York, who together with one other Bishop, consecrated, in the city of New-York, Bishop Hobart and Bishop Griswold, both now living Thus hath God, by his power preserved his church and his word and with them his ministry.

* For the first part of this catalogue see Eusebiu's history.

ERRATA.

Page	10	line	2	for *is* read	*in.*
	12		2	for dispute —	despise.
	25		17	for dispense —	despise.
	43		17	for of —	on.
	86		18	for time —	line.
	101		23	for Reza —	Beza.
	123		11	for different —	difficult.
	163	*note*	for W. Mc'Loed —		Mr. Mc'Loed.
	171		3	for then —	them.

was not his expectation to render his cause successful by the *length* of his speech. I presume gentlemen the house is prepared for a decision.

Chairman. I am sorry to observe that there is still a contrariety of opinion in the council upon this important subject. I had thought, until the last gentleman spoke, that there could not be a dissenting voice. But since this contrariety of opinion does exist, your Chairman and Jurors, in consideration of the great importance of this subject, and of the peculiar delicacy and responsibility of their situation, think proper to omit giving their decision till a future day. This determination has not arisen from any diversity of opinion, between the Chairman and Jurors—we are all of one mind. After mature deliberation, our decision shall be made public, with our reasons for it.

Presbyter Quintus. Gentlemen, since this question is disposed of, I beg leave to present a single charge against Episcopacy, which I pledge myself to support, and which I request the council may proceed to try, before they adjourn. It is, *that Episcopacy at the time she reformed herself from the errors of Rome, was adorned with the peculiar doctrines of Grace, or that Gospel system termed Calvinism, and that she has now thrown it*

off, and adopted the dry and hopeless system of Arminius.

Ruling Elder. Gentlemen, I hope the assembly will gratify the gentleman by examining this charge.

Presbyter Baptisticus. Gentlemen, I have also a charge to prefer, which I hope will also be considered. It is *that Episcopacy, at a certain period adopted in theory and practice, and still maintains, certain crude and unscriptural doctrines in reference to the ordinance of Baptism, whereby she renders void the commission of Christ to his Apostles.*

Chairman. Gentlemen, it will be impossible to attend to the examination of these charges at this time, inasmuch as the day is at hand which will call me and a number of the gentlemen who compose this assembly, to the councils of the nation. I shall with pleasure meet this council on some future day; at which time I shall pronounce the decision on the question already discussed, and will hear the examination of those now proposed.

ADJOURNED.

The trial of the last charges, has been had, and shall be reported in due time.

R. C. C. *Reporter.*

March, 1817.

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